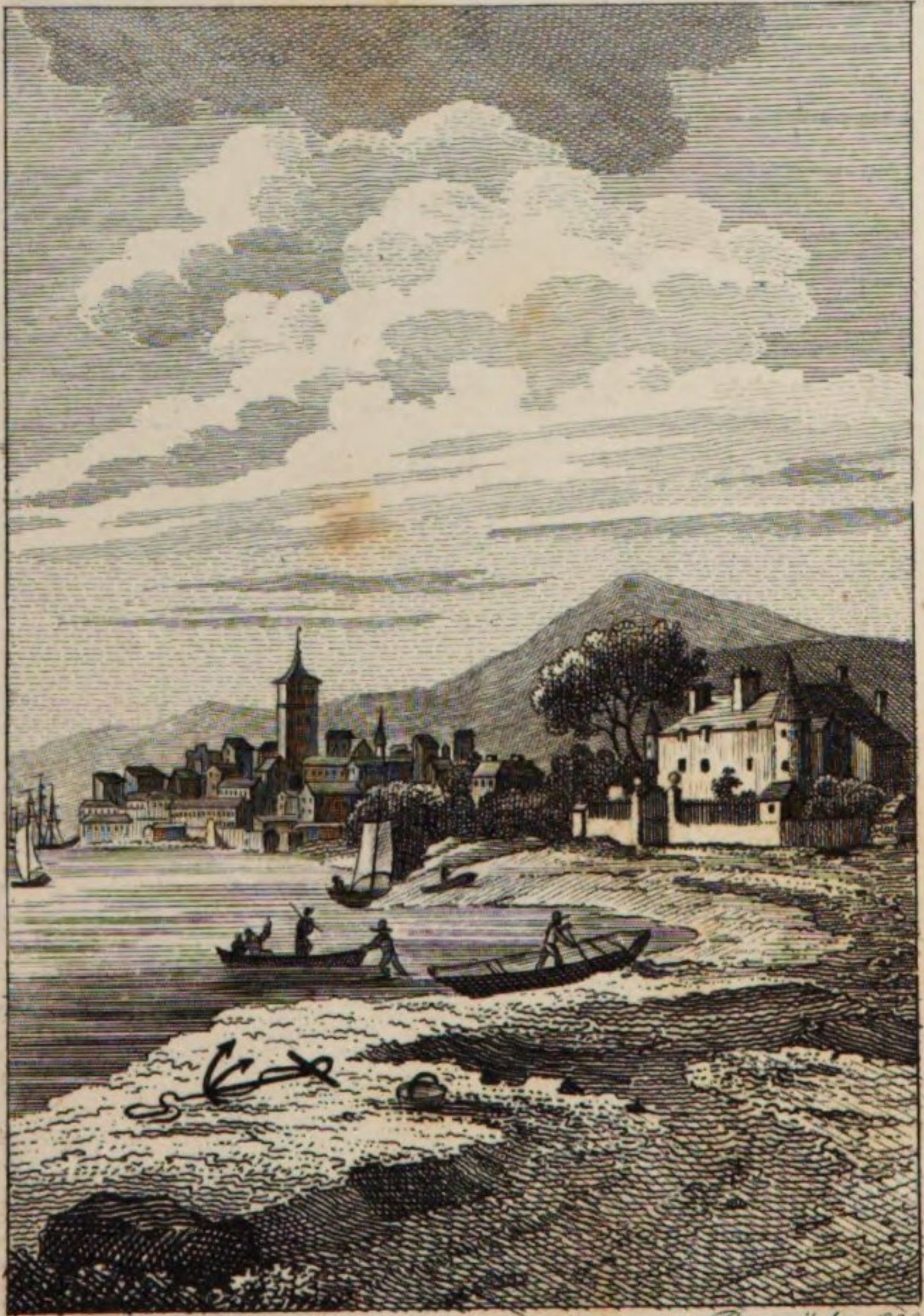




Rossmäster 1822

*The Antiquary. III.
Dundee. (fair port.)*

THE
WORKS

OF

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

VOL. XX.

ROMANCES VOL. XI.

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ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1822.







THE  
ANTIQUARY.

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF „WAVERLEY“ AND „GUY  
MANNERING.“

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*I knew Anselmo. He was shrewd and prudent,  
Wisdom and cunning had their shares of him;  
But he was shrewish as a wayward child,  
And pleased again by toys which childhood please;  
As — book of fables graced with print of wood,  
Or else the jingling of a rusty medal,  
Or the rare melody of some old ditty,  
That first was sung to please King Pepin's cradle.*

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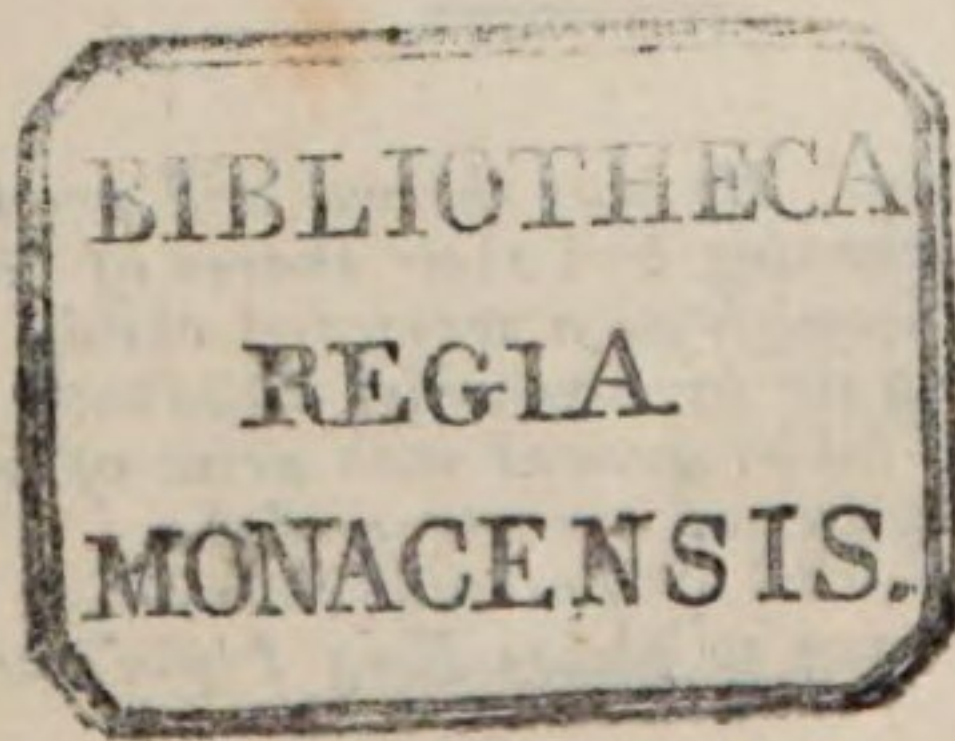
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER XXII.

*Wiser Raymond , as in his closet pent ,
Laughs at such danger and adventurement ,
When half his lands are spent in golden
 smoke ,
And now his second hopeful glasse is broke ;
But yet , is haply his third furnace hold ,
Devoteth all his pots and pans to gold.*

Old Play.

ABOUT a week after the adventures commemorated in our last chapter, Mr Oldbuck, descending to his breakfast-parlour, found that his womankind were not upon duty, his toast not made, and the silver jug, which went to receive his libations of mum, not duly aired for its reception.

“This confounded hot-brained boy” — he said to himself, “now that he begins to get

out of danger, I can tolerate this life no longer — All goes to sixes and sevens — an universal saturnalia seems to be proclaimed in my peaceful and orderly family. — I ask for my sister — no answer — I call, I shout — I invoke my inmates by more names than the Romans gave to their deities — At length, Jenny, whose shrill voice I have heard this half hour lilting in the tartarean regions of the kitchen, condescends to hear me, and reply, but without coming up stairs, so the conversation must be continued at the top of my lungs." — Here he again began to hollow aloud, «Jenny, where's Miss Oldbuck?"

«Miss Grizzy's in the captain's room."

«Umph, I thought so — and where's my niece?"

«Miss Mary's making the captain's tea."

«Umph, I supposed as much again — and where's Caxon?"

«Awa' to the town about the captain's fowling-gun and his setting-dog."

«And who the devil's to dress my periwig, you silly jade? — when you knew that Miss Wardour and Sir Arthur were coming here early after breakfast, how could you let Caxon go on such a Tom-fool's errand?"

«Me! what could I hinder him? your honour

wadna hae us contradict the captain e'en now, and him maybe deeing?"

"Dying! — eh! — what? — has he been worse?"

"Na, he's no nae waur that I ken of."

"Then he must be better — and what good is a dog and a gun to do here, but the one to destroy all my furniture, steal from my larder, and perhaps worry the cat, and the other to shoot somebody through the head? — he has had gunning and pistolling enough to serve him one while, I should think."

Here Miss Oldbuck entered the parlour, at the door of which Oldbuck was carrying on this conversation, he bellowing down to Jenny, and she again screaming upward in reply. "Dear brother," said the old lady, "ye'll cry yoursel as hairse as a corbie — is that the way to skreigh when there's a sick person in the house?"

"Upon my word, the sick person's like to have all the house to himself. I have gone without my breakfast, and am like to go without my wig; and I must not, I suppose, presume to say I feel either hunger or cold, for fear of disturbing the sick gentleman, who lies six rooms off, and who feels himself well enough to send for his dog and his gun, though he knows I detest such implements ever since our

elder brother, poor Williewald, marched out of the world on a pair of damp feet caught in the Kittlefitting moss — But that signifies nothing — I suppose I shall be expected by and by to lend a hand to carry Squire Hector out upon his litter, while he indulges his sportsman-like propensities by shooting my pigeons, or my turkeys — I think any of the *feræ naturæ* are safe from him for one while.”

Miss M’Intyre now entered, and began to her usual morning’s task of arranging her uncle’s breakfast, with the alertness of one who is too late in setting about a task, and is anxious to make up for lost time. But this did not avail her. “Take care, you silly womankind — that’s too near the fire — the bottle will burst — and I suppose you intend to reduce the toast to a cinder as a burnt-offering for Juno, or what d’ye call her — the female dog there, with some such Pantheon-kind of a name, that your wise brother has, in his first moments of mature reflection, ordered up as a fitting inmate of my house, (I thank him,) and meet company to aid the rest of the womankind of my household in their daily conversation and intercourse with him.”

“Dear uncle, don’t be angry about the poor spaniel; she’s been tied up at my brother’s lodgings at Fairport, and she’s broke her chain

twice, and come running down here to him; and you would not have us beat the faithful beast away from the door — it moans as if it had some sense of poor Hector's misfortune, and will hardly stir from the door of his room."

"Why, they said Caxton had gone to Fairport after his dog and gun."

"O dear sir, no — it was to fetch some dressings that were wanted, and Hector only wished him to bring out his gun, as he was going to Fairport at any rate."

"Well, then, it is not altogether so foolish a business, considering what a mess of womankind have been about it — Dressings, quotha? — and who is to dress my wig? — but I suppose Jenny will undertake" — continued the old bachelor, looking at himself in the glass, — "to make it somewhat decent — and now let us set to breakfast — with what appetite we may — well may I say to Hector as Sir Isaac Newton did to his dog Diamond, when the animal (I detest dogs) flung down the taper among calculations which had occupied the philosopher for twenty years, and consumed the whole mass of materials — Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!"

"I assure you, sir, my brother is quite sen-

sible of the rashness of his own behaviour, and allows that Mr Lovel behaved very handsomely."

"And much good that will do when he has frightened the lad out of the country — I tell thee, Mary, Hector's understanding, and far more that of femininity, is inadequate to comprehend the extent of the loss which he has occasioned to the present age and to posterity — *aureum quidem opus* — a poem on such a subject — with notes illustrative of all that is clear, and all that is dark; and all that is neither dark nor clear, but hovers in dusky twilight in the region of Caledonian antiquities. I would have made the Celtic panegyrists look about them — Fingal, as they conceitedly term Fin-Mac-Coul, should have disappeared before my search, rolling himself on his cloud like the spirit of Loda. Such an opportunity can hardly again occur to an ancient and grey-haired man — and to see it lost by the mad-cap spleen of a hot-headed boy! but I submit Heaven's will be done."

Thus continued the Antiquary to *maunder*, as his sister expressed it, during the whole time of breakfast, while, despite of sugar and honey, and all the comfits of a Scottish morning tea-table, his reflections rendered the meal bitter to all who heard them. But they knew

the nature of the man. "Monkbarns's bark," said Miss Griselda Oldbuck, in confidential intercourse with Miss Rebecca Blattergowl, "is muckle waur than his bite."

He had suffered in mind extremely while his nephew was in actual danger, and now felt himself at liberty, upon his returning health, to indulge in complaints respecting the trouble he had been put to, and the interruption of his antiquarian labours. Listened to, therefore, in respectful silence by his niece and sister, he unloaded his discontent in such grumblings as we have rehearsed, venting many a sarcasm against womankind, soldiers, dogs, and guns, all which implements of noise, discord, and tumult, as he called them, he professed to hold in utter abomination.

This expectoration of spleen was suddenly interrupted by the noise of a carriage without, when, shaking off all sullenness at the sound, Oldbuck ran nimbly down stairs and up stairs, for both operations were necessary, ere he could receive Miss Wardour and her father at the door of his mansion.

A cordial greeting passed on both sides. And Sir Arthur, referring to his previous enquiries by letter and message, requested to be particularly informed of Captain M'Intyre's health.

"Better than he deserves," was the answer;

“better than he deserves, for disturbing us with his vixen brawls, and breaking God’s peace and the king’s.”

“The young gentleman,” Sir Arthur said, “had been imprudent; but he understood they were indebted to him for the detection of a suspicious character in the young man Lovel.”

“No more suspicious than his own — the young gentleman was a little foolish and headstrong, and refused to answer Hector’s impertinent interrogatories — that is all. Lovel, Sir Arthur, knows how to chuse his confidants better — aye, Miss Wardour, you may look at me — but it is very true — it was in my bosom that he deposited the secret cause of his residence at Fairport, and no stone should have been left unturned on my part to assist him in the pursuit to which he had dedicated himself.”

On hearing this magnanimous declaration on the part of the old Antiquary, Miss Wardour changed colour more than once, and could hardly trust her own ears. For of all confidants to be selected as the depository of love affairs, and such she naturally supposed must have been the subject of communication, (next to Edie Ochiltree) Oldbuck seemed the most uncouth and extraordinary; nor could she sufficiently admire or fret at the extraordinary com-

ination of circumstances which thus threw a secret of such a delicate nature into the possession of persons so unfitted to be entrusted with it. She had next to fear the mode of Oldbuck's entering upon the affair with her father, for such, she doubted not, was his intention. She well knew, that the honest gentleman, however vehement in his prejudices, had no great sympathy with those of others, and she had to fear a most unpleasant explosion, upon an eclairsissement taking place between them. It was therefore with great anxiety that she heard her father request a private interview, and observed Oldbuck readily arise, and shew the way to his library. She remained behind, attempting to converse with the ladies of Monkbarns, but with the distracted feelings of Macbeth, when compelled to disguise his evil conscience, by listening and replying to the observations of the attendant thanes upon the storm of the preceding night, while his whole soul is upon the stretch to listen for the alarm of murder, which he knows must be instantly raised by those who have entered the sleeping apartment of Duncan. But the conversation of the two virtuosi turned on a subject very different from that which Miss Wardour apprehended.

"Mr Oldbuck," said Sir Arthur, when they had, after a due exchange of ceremonies, fairly

seated themselves in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Antiquary, — “you who know so much of my family matters may probably be surprised at the question I am about to put to you.”

“Why, Sir Arthur, if it relates to money, I am very sorry, but” —

“It does relate to money matters, Mr Oldbuck.”

Really then, Sir Arthur,” continued the Antiquary, “in the present state of the money-market — and stocks being so low” —

“You mistake my meaning, Mr Oldbuck,” said the Baronet; “I wished to ask your advice about laying out a large sum of money to advantage.”

“The devil!” exclaimed the Antiquary; and, sensible that his involuntary ejaculation of wonder was not over and above civil, he proceeded to qualify it by expressing his joy that Sir Arthur should have a sum of money to lay out when the commodity was so scarce. “And as for the mode of employing it,” said he, pausing, “the funds are low at present, as I said before, and there are good bargains of land to be had. But had you not better begin by clearing off incumbrances, Sir Arthur? — There is the sum in the personal bond — and the three notes of hand,” — continued he, taking out of the right-hand drawer of his ca-

binet a certain red memorandum-book, of which Sir Arthur, from the experience of former frequent appeals to it, abhorred the very sight — “with the interest thereon, amounting altogether to — let me see” —

“To about a thousand pounds,” said Sir Arthur hastily, “you told me the amount the other day.”

“But there’s another term’s interest due since that, Sir Arthur, and it amounts (errors excepted) to eleven hundred and thirteen pounds, seven shillings, five pennies and three-fourths of a penny sterling — but look over the summation yourself.”

“I dare say you are quite right, my dear sir,” said the Baronet, putting away the book with his hand, as one rejects the old-fashioned civility that presses food upon you, after you have eaten till you nauseate, — “perfectly right, I dare to say, and in the course of three days or less you shall have the full value — that is, if you chuse to accept it in bullion.”

“Bullion! I suppose you mean lead. What the deuce! have we hit on the vein then at last? — But what could I do with a thousand pounds worth, and upwards, of lead? — the former Abbots of Trotcosey might have roofed their church and monastery with it indeed — but for me” —

“By bullion,” said the Baronet, “I mean the precious metals, — gold and silver.”

“Aye! indeed? — And from what Eldorado is this treasure to be imported?”

“Not far from hence,” said Sir Arthur, significantly; “and, now I think of it, you shall see the whole process on one small condition.”

“And what is that?” craved the Antiquary.

“Why, it will be necessary for you to give me your friendly assistance, by advancing one hundred pounds or thereabouts.”

Mr Oldbuck, who had already been grasping in idea the sum, principal and interest, of a debt which he had long regarded as well nigh desperate, was so much astounded at the tables being so unexpectedly turned upon him, that he could only re-echo, in an accent of woe and surprise, the words, “Advance one hundred pounds!”

“Yes, my good sir,” continued Sir Arthur; “but upon the best possible security of being repaid in the course of two or three days.”

There was a pause — either Oldbuck’s nether-jaw had not recovered its position so as to enable him to utter a negative, or his curiosity kept him silent.

“I would not propose to you,” continued Sir Arthur, “to oblige me thus far, if I did not possess actual proofs of the reality of those

expectations which I now hold out to you. And, I assure you, Mr Oldbuck, that in entering fully upon this topic, it is my purpose to shew my confidence in you, and my sense of your kindness on many former occasions."

Mr Oldbuck professed his sense of obligation, but carefully avoided committing himself by any promise of further assistance.

"Mr Dousterswivel," said Sir Arthur, "having discovered" —

Here Oldbuck broke in, his eyes sparkling with indignation. "Sir Arthur, I have so often warned you of the knavery of that rascally quack, that I really wonder you should quote him to me."

"But listen — listen," interrupted Sir Arthur in his turn, "it will do you no harm. In short, Dousterswivel persuaded me to witness an experiment which he had made in the ruins of St Ruth — and what do you think we found?"

"Another spring of water, I suppose, of which the rogue had beforehand taken care to ascertain the situation and source."

"No, indeed — a casket of gold and silver coins — here they are."

With that, Sir Arthur drew from his pocket a large ram's-horn, with a copper cover, containing a considerable quantity of coins, chiefly silver, but with a few gold pieces intermixed.

The Antiquary's eyes glistened as he eagerly spread them out on the table.

“Upon my word — Scotch, English, and foreign coins, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and some of them *rari — et rariores — etiam rarissimi!* Here is the bonnet-piece of James V. — the unicorn of James II. — aye, and the gold testoon of Queen Mary, with her head and the Dauphin's — And these were really found in the ruins of St Ruth?”

“Most assuredly — my own eyes witnessed it.”

“Well,” replied Oldbuck, “but you must tell me the when the where — the how” —

“The when,” answered Sir Arthur, “was at midnight the last full moon — the where, as I have told you, in the ruins of St Ruth's priory — the how, was by a nocturnal experiment of Dousterswivel accompanied only by myself.”

“Indeed!” said Oldbuck, “and what means of discovery did you employ?”

“Only a simple suffumigation,” said the Baronet, “accompanied by availing ourselves of the suitable planetary hour.”

“Simple suffumigation? simple nonsensification — planetary hour? planetary fiddlestick *Sapiens dominabitur astris.* — My dear Sir Arthur, that fellow has made a gull of you above ground and under ground, and he would have

made a gull of you in the air too if he had been by when you were craned up the devil's turnpike yonder at Halket-head — to be sure, the transformation would have been then peculiarly *apropos*."

"Well, Mr Oldbuck, I am obliged to you for your indifferent opinion of my discernment; but I think you will give me credit for having seen what I *say* I saw."

"Certainly, Sir Arthur," said the Antiquary, "to this extent at least, that I know Sir Arthur Wardour will not say he saw any thing but what he *thought* he saw."

"Well then," replied the Baronet, "as there is a Heaven above us, Mr Oldbuck, I saw, with my own eyes, these coins dug out of the chancel of St Ruth at midnight — And as to Dousterswivel, though the discovery be owing to his science, yet to tell the truth, I do **not** think he would have had firmness of mind to have gone through with it if I had not been beside him."

"Aye! indeed?" said Oldbuck, in the tone used when one wishes to hear the end of a story before making any comment.

"Yes, truly," continued Sir Arthur, "I assure you I was upon my guard — we did hear some very uncommon sounds, that is certain, proceeding from among the ruins."

“O, you did?” said Oldbuck, “an accomplice hid among them, I suppose?”

“Not a jot, said the Baronet; “the sounds, though of a hideous and preternatural character, rather resembled those of a man who sneezes violently than any other — one deep groan I certainly heard besides — and Dousterswivel assures me, that he beheld the spirit Peolphan, the Great Hunter of the North, (look for him in your Nicolus Remigius, or Petrus Thyracus, Mr Oldbuck,) who mimicked the motion of snuff-taking and its effects.”

“These indications, however singular as proceeding from such a personage, seem, to have been *apropos* to the matter,” said the Antiquary; “for you see the case, which includes these coins, has all the appearance of being an old-fashioned Scottish snuff-mill. But you persevered, in spite of the terrors of this sneezing goblin?”

“Why, I think it probable that a man of inferior sense or consequence might have given way; but I was jealous of an imposture, conscious of the duty I owed to my family in maintaining my courage under every contingency, and therefore I compelled Dousterswivel, by actual and violent threats, to proceed with what he was about to do; and, sir, the proof of his skill and honesty is this parcel of gold

and silver pieces, out of which I beg you to select such coins or medals as will best suit your collection."

"Why, Sir Arthur, since you are so good, and on condition you will permit me to mark the value, according to Pinkerton's catalogue and appreciation, against your account in my red book, I will with pleasure select" —

"Nay," said Sir Arthur Wardour, "I do not mean you should consider them as any thing but a gift of friendship, and least of all would I stand by the valuation of your friend Pinkerton, who has impugned the ancient and trustworthy authorities, upon which, as upon venerable and moss-grown pillars, the credit of Scottish Antiquities reposed."

"Aye, aye," rejoined Oldbuck, "you mean, I suppose, Mair and Boece, the Jachin and Boaz, not of history, but of falsification and forgery. And for all you have told me, I look on your friend Dousterswivel to be as apocryphal as any of them."

"Why, then, Mr Oldbuck," said Sir Arthur, "not to awaken old disputes, I suppose you think, that because I believe in the ancient history of my country, I have neither eyes nor ears to ascertain what modern events pass before me?"

"Pardon me, Sir Arthur," rejoined the Anti-

quary. «but I consider all the affectation of terror which this worthy gentleman, your coadjutor, chose to play off, as being merely one part of his trick or mystery. And, with respect to the gold or silver coins, they are so mixed and mingled in country and date, that I cannot suppose they could be any genuine hoard, and rather suppose them to be like the purses upon the table of Hudibras's lawyer —

— Money placed for show,
Like nest-eggs, to make clients lay,
And for his false opinions pay. —

It is the trick of all professions, my dear Sir Arthur. Pray, may I ask you how much this discovery cost you?"

«About ten guineas.»

«And you have gained what is equivalent to twenty in actual bullion, and what may be perhaps worth as much more to such fools as ourselves, who are willing to pay for curiosity. This was allowing you a tempting profit on the first hazard, I must needs admit. And what is the next venture he proposes?"

«An hundred and fifty pounds; I have given him one-third part of the money, and I thought it likely you might assist me with the balance.»

“I should think that this cannot be meant as a parting blow — it is not of weight and importance sufficient; he will probably let us win this hand also, as sharpers manage a raw gamester. — Sir Arthur, I hope you believe I would serve you?”

“Certainly, Mr Oldbuck; I think my confidence in you on this occasions leaves no room to doubt it.”

“Well, then, allow me to speak to Dousterswivel. If the money can be advanced usefully and advantageously for you, why, for old neighbourhood’s sake, you shall not want it; but if, as I think, I can recover the treasure for you without making such an advance, you will, I presume, have no objection?”

“Unquestionably, I can have none whatsoever.”

“Then, where is Dousterswivel?” continued the Antiquary.

“To tell you the truth, he is in my carriage below; but knowing your prejudice against him” —

“I thank Heaven, I am not prejudiced against any man, Sir Arthur; it is systems, not individuals, that incur my reprobation.” He rang the bell. “Jenny, Sir Arthur and I offer our compliments to Mr Dousterswivel, the gentle-

man in Sir Arthur's carriage, and beg to have the pleasure of speaking with him here."

Jenny departed and delivered her message. It had been by no means a part of the project of Dousterswivel to let Mr Oldbuck into his supposed mystery. He had relied upon Sir Arthur obtaining the necessary accommodation without any discussion as to the nature of the application, and only waited below for the purpose of possessing himself of the deposit as soon as possible, for he foresaw that his career was drawing to a close. But when summoned to the presence of Sir Arthur and Mr Oldbuck, he resolved gallantly to put confidence in his powers of impudence, of which, the reader may have observed, his natural share was very liberal.

The Alchemist.

«Lead adventures of all kinds are very precarious, Mr Dousterswivel; but I am happy to learn,” continued the Antiquary, “from my friend, Sir Arthur, that you have taken up a better trade, and become a discoverer of gold.”

«Ach, Mr Oldenbuck, mine goot and honoured patron should not have told a word about dat little matter; for, though I have all the reliance — yes, indeed, on goot Mr Oldenbuck's prudence and discretion, and his great friendship for Sir Arthur Wwardour — yet, my heavens! it is an great ponderous secret.”

«More ponderous than any of the metal we shall make by it, I fear,” answered Oldbuck.

«Dat is just as you shall have de faith and de patience for de grand experiment — If you join wid Sir Arthur, as he is put one hundred and fifty — see here is one fifty in your dirty Fairport bank-note — you put one other hundred and fifty in de dirty notes, and you shall have de pure gold and silver, I cannot tell how much.”

«Nor any one for you, I believe,” said the Antiquary. «But hark you, Mr Dousterswivel, suppose, without troubling this same sneezing spirit with any farther fumigations, we should go in a body, and having fair day-light and our good consciences to befriend us, using no other conjuring implements than good substantial pick-axes and shovels, fairly trench the area of the chancel in the ruins of St Ruth, from one end to the other, and so ascertain the existence of this supposed treasure, without putting ourselves to any farther expence; the

ruins belong to Sir Arthur himself, so there can be no objection. Do you think we shall succeed in this way of managing the matter?"

"Bah! — you will not find one copper thimble — But Sir Arthur will do his pleasure — I have shewed him how it is possible — very possible — to have de great sum of money for his occasions — I have shewed him de real experiment — If he likes not to believe, goot Mr Oldenbuck, it is nothing to Herman Dousterswivel — he only loses de money and de gold and de silvers — dat is all."

Sir Arthur Wardour cast an intimidated glance at Oldbuck, who, especially when present, held, notwithstanding their frequent difference of opinion, no ordinary influence over his sentiments. In truth, the Baronet felt what he would not willingly have acknowledged, that his genius stood rebuked before that of the Antiquary. He respected him as a shrewd, penetrating, sarcastic character, feared his satire, and had some confidence in the general soundness of his opinions. He therefore looked at him as if desiring his leave before indulging his credulity. Dousterswivel saw he was in danger of losing his dupe, unless he could make some favourable impression on the adviser.

"I know, my goot Mr Oldenbuck, it is one vanity to speak to you about de spirit and de

goblin. But look at this curious horn; I know you know de curiosity of all de countries, and how de great Oldenburgh horn, as they keep still in de Museum at Copenhagen, was given to de Duke of Oldenburgh by one female spirit of de wood. Now I could not put one trick on you if I were willing, you who know all de curiosity so well, and dere it is de horn full of coins — if it had been a box, or case, I would have said nothing."

"Being a horn," said Oldbuck, "does indeed strengthen your argument. It was an implement of nature's fashioning, and therefore much used among rude nations, although it may be the metaphorical horn is more frequent in proportion to the progress of civilization. And this present horn," he continued, rubbing it upon his sleeve, "is a curious and venerable relique, and no doubt was intended to prove a *cornucopia*, or horn of plenty, to some one or other, but whether to the Adept or his patron may be justly doubted."

"Well, Mr Oldenbuck, I find you still hard of belief — but let me assure you, de monksh understood de *magisterium*."

"Let us leave talking of the *magisterium*, Mr Dousterswivel, and think a little about the magistrate. Are you aware that this occupation of yours is against the law of Scotland, and

that both Sir Arthur and myself are in the commission of the peace?"

"Mine Heaven! and what is dat to de purpose when I am doing you all de goot I can?"

"Why, you must know, that when the legislature abolished the cruel laws against witchcraft, they had no hope of destroying the superstitious feelings of humanity on which such chimeras had been founded, and to prevent those feelings from being tampered with by artful and designing persons, it is enacted by the *ninth* of George the Second, chap. 5. that whosoever shall pretend, by his alleged skill, in any occult or crafty science, to discover such goods as are lost, stolen or concealed, he shall suffer punishment by pillory and imprisonment as a common cheat and impostor."

"And is dat de laws?" asked Dousterswivel, with some agitation.

"Thyself shall see the act," replied the Antiquary.

"Den, gentlemens, I shall take my leave of you, dat is all; I do not like to stand on your what you call pillory — it is very bad way to take de air, I think; and I do not like your prisons no more, where one cannot take de air at all."

"If such be your taste, Mr Dousterswivel, I advise you to stay where you are, for I cannot

let you go, unless it be in the society of a constable; and, moreover, I expect you will attend us just now to the ruins of St Ruth, and point out the place where you propose to find this treasure."

"Mine heaven! Mr Oldenbuck, what usage is this to your old friend, when I tell you so plain as I can speak, dat if you go now, you will get not so much treasure as one poor shabby sixpence?"

"I will try the experiment, however, and you shall be dealt with according to its success, — always with Sir Arthur's permission."

Sir Arthur, during this investigation, had looked extremely embarrassed, and, to use a vulgar but expressive phrase, chop-fallen. Oldbuck's obstinate disbelief led him strongly to suspect the imposture of Dousterswivel, and the Adept's mode of keeping his ground was less resolute than he had expected. Yet he did not entirely give him up.

"Mr Oldbuck," said the Baronet, "you do Mr Dousterswivel less than justice. He has undertaken to make this discovery by the use of his art, and by applying characters descriptive of the Intelligences presiding over the planetary hour in which the experiment is to be made; and you require him to proceed, under pain of punishment, without allowing him the use of

any of the preliminaries which he considers as the means of procuring success."

"I did not say that exactly — I only required him to be present when we make the search, and not to leave us during the interval. I fear he may have some intelligence with the Intelligences you talk of, and that whatever may be now hidden at Saint Ruth may disappear before we get there."

"Well, gentlemen," said Dousterswivel sullenly, "I will make no objections to go with you; but I tell you beforehand, you shall not find so much of any thing as shall be worth your going twenty yard from your own gate."

"We will put that to a fair trial," said the Antiquary; and the Baronet's equipage being ordered, Miss Wardour received an intimation from her father, that she was to remain at Monkbarns until his return from an airing. The young lady was somewhat at a loss how to reconcile this direction with the communication which she supposed must have passed between Sir Arthur and the Antiquary, but she was compelled, for the present, to remain in a most unpleasant state of suspense.

The journey of the treasure seekers was melancholy enough. Dousterswivel maintained a sulky silence, brooding at once over disappointed

expectation and the risk of punishment; Sir Arthur, whose golden dreams had been gradually fading away, surveyed, in gloomy prospect, the impending difficulties of his situation; and Oldbuck, who perceived that his having so far interfered in his neighbour's affairs gave him a right to expect some actual and efficient assistance, sadly pondered to what extent it would be necessary to draw open the strings of his purse. Thus each being wrapped in his own unpleasant ruminations, there was hardly a word said on either side, until they reached the Four Horse-Shoes, by which sign the little inn was distinguished. They procured at this place the necessary assistance and implements for digging, and, while they were busy about these preparations, were suddenly joined by the old beggar, Edie Ochiltree.

“Aha, old true-penny!” said Oldbuck, when he had heard “The Lord bless your honour, and long life to you — weel pleased am I to hear that young Captain M’Intyre is like to be on his legs again sune — Think on your poor beadsman the day.”

“Why, thou hast never come to Monkbarns since thy perils by rock and flood — here’s something for thee to buy snuff,” — and, fumbling for his purse, he pulled out at the same time the horn which inclosed the coins.

“Aye, and there’s something to pit it in,” said the mendicant, eyeing the ram’s horn — “that loom’s an auld acquaintance o’ mine. I could take my aith to that sneeshing-mull amang a thousand — I carried it for mony a year, till I niffered it for this tin ane wi’ auld George Glen, the dammer and sinker, when he took a fancy till’t down at Glen-Withershins yonder.”

“Aye! indeed?” said Oldbuck, — “so you exchanged it with a miner! but I presume you never saw it so well filled before?” — and, opening it, he showed the coins.

“Troth, ye may swear that, Monkbarns — when it was mine it ne’er had abune the like o’ saxpenny worth o’ black rappee in’t at ance; but I reckon ye’ll be gaun to make an antic o’t, as ye hae dune wi’ mony an orra thing besides. Odd, I wish ony body wad make an antic o’ me; but mony ane will find worth in auld bits o’ capper and horn and airn, that care unco little about an auld carle o’ their country and kind.”

“You may now guess,” said Oldbuck, turning to Sir Arthur, “to whose good offices you were indebted the other night. To trace this cornucopia of yours to a miner is bringing it pretty near a friend of ours — I hope we shall be as successful this morning without paying for it.”

“And where is your honours gaun the day,” said the mendicant, „wi’ a your picks and shools? — Odd, this will be some o’ your tricks, Monkbarns; ye’ll be for whirling some o’ the auld monks down by yonder out o’ their graves afore they hear the last call — but I’s e follow ye at ony rate, and see what ye mak o’t.”

The party soon arrived at the ruins of the priory, and, having gained the chancel, stood still to consider what course they were to pursue next. The Antiquary, mean time, addressed the Adept.

„Pray, Mr Dousterswivel, what is your advice in this matter? — Shall we have most likelihood of success if we dig from east to west, or from west to east? — or will you assist us with your triangular vial of May-dew, or with your divining-rod of witches-hazel? Or will you have the goodness to supply us with a few thumping blustering terms of art, which, if they fail in our present service, may be useful to those who have not the happiness to be bachelors, to still their brawling children withal?”

„Mr Oldenbuck,” said Dousterswivel doggedly, „I have told you already you will make no good work at all, and I will find some way of mine own to thank you for your civilities to me — yes, indeed.”

„If your honours are thinking of tirling the

floor," said old Edie, „and wad but tak a puir body's advice, I would begin below that muckle stane that has the man there streekit out upon his back in the midst o't."

„I have some reason for thinking favourably of that plan myself," said the Baronet.

„And I have nothing to say against it," said Oldbuck; „it was not unusual to hide treasure in the tombs of the deceased — many instances might be quoted of that from Bartholinus and others."

The tomb-stone, the same beneath which the coins had been found by Sir Arthur and the German, was once more forced aside, and the earth gave easy way to the spade.

„It's travell'd earth that," said Edie, „it houks sae eithly — I ken it weel, for ance I wrought a simmer wi' auld Will Winnett, the bedral, and howkit mair graves than ane in my day; but I left him in winter, for it was unco cauld wark; and then it cam a green Yule, and the folk died thick and fast — for ye ken a green Yule makes a fat kirk-yard — and I never dowed to bide a hard turn o' wark in my life — sae aff I gaed, and left Will to delve his last dwellings by himsel, for Edie."

The diggers were now so far advanced in their labours as to discover that the sides of the grave which they were clearing out had been origi-

nally secured by four walls of freestone, forming a parallelogram, for the reception, probably, of the coffin.

„It is worth while proceeding in our labours,” said the Antiquary to Sir Arthur, „were it but for curiosity’s sake. I wonder on whose sepulchre they have bestowed such uncommon pains.”

„The arms on the shield,” said Sir Arthur, and sighed as he spoke it, „are the same with those on Misticot’s tower, supposed to have been built by Malcolm the usurper. No man knew where he was buried, and there is an old prophecy in our family, that bodes us no good when his grave shall be discovered.”

„I wot,” said the beggar, „I have often heard that when I was a bairn,

„If Malcolm the Misticot’s grave were fun’,
The lands of Knockwinnock are lost and won.”

Oldbuck, with his spectacles on his nose, had already knelt down on the monument, and was tracing, partly with his eye, partly with his finger, the mouldered devices upon the effigy of the deceased warrior. „It is the Knockwinnock arms sure enough,” he exclaimed, „quarterly with the coat of Wardour.”

„Richard, called the Red-handed Wardour,

married Sybil Knockwinnock, the heiress of the Saxon family, and by that alliance," said Sir Arthur, "brought the castle and estate into the name of Wardour, in the year of God 1150."

"Very true, Sir Arthur, and here is the baton-sinister, the mark of illegitimacy, extended diagonally through both coats upon the shield. Where can our eyes have been, that they did not see this curious monument before?"

"Na, whare was the through-stane, that it didna come before our een till e'now?" said Ochiltree; "for I hae ken'd this auld kirk, man and bairn, for saxty lang years, and I ne'er noticed it afore, and it's nae sic mote neither but what ane might see it in their parritch."

All were now induced to tax their memory as to the former state of the ruins in that corner of the chancel, and all agreed in recollecting a considerable pile of rubbish which must have been removed and spread abroad in order to make the tomb visible. Sir Arthur might, indeed, have remembered seeing the monument on the former occasion, but his mind was too much agitated to attend to the circumstance as a novelty.

While the assistants were engaged in these recollections and discussions, the workmen proceeded with their labour. They had already dug to the depth of nearly five feet, and as the

flinging out the soil became more and more difficult, they began at length to tire of the job.

"We're down to the till now," said one of them, "and the ne'er a coffin or ony thing else is here — some cunning chiel's been afore us, I reckon;" and the labourer scrambled out of the grave.

"Hout, lad," said Edie, getting down in his room, "let me try my hand for an auld bedral — ye're gude seekers, but ill finders."

So soon as he got into the grave he struck his pike-staff forcibly down — it encountered resistance in its descent, and the beggar exclaimed, like a Scotch schoolboy when he finds any thing, "Nae halvers and quarters — hale o' mine ain and nane o' my neighbours."

Every body, from the dejected Baronet to the sullen Adept, now caught the spirit of curiosity, crowded round the grave, and would have jumped into it could its space have contained them. The labourers, who had begun to flag in their monotonous and apparently hopeless task, now resumed their tools, and plied them with all the ardour of expectation. Their shovels soon grated upon a hard wooden surface, which, as the earth was cleared away, assumed the distinct form of a chest, but greatly smaller than a coffin. Now all hands were at work to heave it out of the grave, and all voices, as it was

raised, proclaimed its weight and augured its value. They were not mistaken.

When the chest or box was placed on the surface, and the lid forced up by a pick-axe, there was displayed first a coarse canvas cover, then a quantity of oakum, and beneath that a quantity of ingots of silver. A general exclamation hailed a discovery so surprising and unexpected. The Baronet threw his hands and eyes up to Heaven, with the silent rapture of one who is delivered from inexpressible distress of mind. Oldbuck, almost unable to credit his eyes, lifted one piece of silver after another. There was neither inscription nor stamp upon them, excepting one, which seemed to be Spanish. He could have no doubt of the purity and great value of the treasure before him. Still, however, removing piece by piece, he examined row by row, expecting to discover that the lower layers were of inferior value; but he could perceive no difference in this respect, and found himself compelled to admit, that Sir Arthur had possessed himself of bullion to the value perhaps of a thousand pounds sterling. Sir Arthur now promised the assistants a handsome recompense for their trouble, and began to busy himself about the mode of conveying this rich windfall to the Castle of Knockwinnock, when the Adept, recovering from his

surprise, which had equalled that exhibited by any other individual of the party, twitched his sleeve, and having offered his humble congratulations, turned next to Oldbuck with an air of triumph.

“I did tell you, my goot friend, Mr Oldenbuck, dat I was to seek opportunity to thank you for your civility; now do you not think I have found out very goot way to return thank?”

“Why, Mr Dousterswivel, do *you* pretend to have had any hand in our good success? — You forget you refused us all aid of your science, man. And you are here without your weapons that should have fought the battle which you pretend to have gained in our behalf. You have used neither charm, lamen, sigil, talisman, spell, chrystal, pentacle, magic mirror, or geomantic figure. Where be your periapts, and your abracadabras, man? your May-fearn, your vervain,

“Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your
panther,

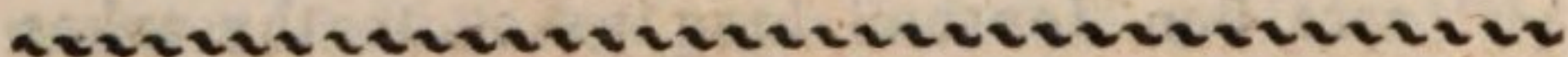
Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your
adrop,

Your Lato, Azoch, Zernich, Chibrit, Heautarit,
With all your broths, your menstrues, your
materials,

Would burst a man to name?” —

Ah! rare Ben Jonson! long peace to thy ashes for a scourge of the quacks of thy day! — who looked to see them revive in our own?"

The answer of the Adept to the Antiquary's tirade we must defer to our next chapter.



CHAPTER XXIV.

*Clause. You now shall know the king o'
 the beggars' treasure; —
 Yes — ere to-morrow you shall find your
 harbour
 Here, — fail me not, for if I live I'll fit you.
 The Beggar's Bush.*

THE German, determined, it would seem, to assert the vantage-ground on which the discovery had placed him, replied with great pomp and stateliness to the attack of the Antiquary: "Maister Oldenbuck, all dis may be very witty and comedy, but I have nothing to say — nothing at all — to people dat will not believe deir own eye-sights. It is very true dat I ave not any of de things of de art, and it makes de more wonder what I has done dis day. — But I would ask of you, mine honoured and

goot and generous patron, to put your hand into your right-hand waistcoat pocket, and shew me what you shall find dere."

Sir Arthur obeyed his direction, and pulled out the small plate of silver which he had used under the Adept's auspices upon the former occasion. „It is very true," said Sir Arthur, looking gravely at the Antiquary, „this is the graduated and calculated sigil by which Mr Dousterswivel and I regulated our first discovery."

„Pshaw! pshaw! my dear friend," said Old-buck, „you are too wise to believe in the influence of a trumpery crown-piece, beat out thin, and a parcel of scratches upon it. I tell thee, Sir Arthur, that if Dousterswivel had known where to get this treasure himself, you would not have been lord of the least share of it."

„In troth, please your honour," said Edie, who put in his word on all occasions, „I think, since Mr Dunkerswivel has had sae muckle merit in discovering a' the gear, the least ye can do is to gie him that o't that's left behint for his labour, for doubtless he that ken'd how to find sae muckle will hae nae difficulty to find mair."

Dousterswivel's brow grew very dark at this proposal of leaving him to his „ain purchase,"

as Ochiltree expressed it; but the beggar, drawing him aside, whispered a word or two in his ear, to which he seemed to give serious attention.

Meanwhile, Sir Arthur, his heart warm with his good fortune, said aloud, „Never mind our friend Monkbarns, Mr Dousterswivel, but come to the castle to-morrow, and I'll convince you that I am not ungrateful for the hints you have given me about this matter, and the fifty Fairport dirty notes, as you call them, are heartily at your service. — Come, my lads, get the cover of this precious chest fastened up again.”

But the cover had in the confusion fallen aside among the rubbish, or the loose earth which had been removed from the grave — in short, it was not to be seen.

„Never mind, my good lads; tie the tarpaulin over it, and get it away to the carriage — Monkbarns, will ye walk? I must go back your way to take up Miss Wardour.”

„And, I hope, to take up your dinner also, Sir Arthur, and drink a glass of wine for joy of our happy adventure. Besides you should write about the business to the Exchequer, in case of any interference on the part of the crown. It will be easy to get a deed of gift should they make any claim — we must talk about it though.”

„And I particularly recommend silence to all who are present,” said Sir Arthur, looking round. All bowed and professed themselves dumb.

„Why, as to that,” said Monkbarns, „recommending secrecy where a dozen of people are acquainted with the circumstance to be concealed, is only putting the truth in masquerade, for the story will be circulated under twenty different shapes. But never mind, we will state the true one to the Barons, and that is all that is necessary.”

„I incline to send off an express to-night,” said the Baronet.

„I can recommend your honour to a sure hand,” said Ochiltree; „little Davie Mailsetter and the butcher’s reisting powney.”

„We will talk over the matter as we go to Monkbarns,” said Sir Arthur. — „My lads (to the work people) come with me to the Four Horse-Shoes, that I may take down all your names. — Dousterswivel, I won’t ask you to go down to Monkbarns, as the laird and you differ so widely in opinion; but do not fail to come to see me to-morrow.”

Dousterswivel growled out an answer in which the words, „duty,” — „mine honoured patron,” — and „wait upon Sir Arthurs,” — were alone distinguishable; and after the Baronet and his

friend had left the ruins, followed by the servants and workmen, who, in hope of reward and whisky, joyfully attended their leader, the Adept remained in a brown study by the side of the open grave.

„Who was it as could have thought this?“ he ejaculated unconsciously. „Mine heiligkeit! I have hear of such things, and often spoken of such things — but, sapperment! I never thought to see them! And if I had gone but two or dree feet deeper down in the earth — mein himmel! it had been all mine own — so much more as I have been muddling about to get from this fool’s man.”

Here the German ceased his soliloquy, for, raising his eyes, he encountered those of Edie Ochiltree, who had not followed the rest of the company, but, resting as usual on his pike-staff, had planted himself on the other side of the grave. The features of the old man, naturally shrewd and expressive almost to an appearance of knavery, seemed in this instance so keenly knowing, that even the assurance of Dousterswivel, though a professed adventurer, sunk beneath their expression. But he saw the necessity of an eclaircissement, and, rallying his spirits, instantly began to sound the mendicant on the occurrences of the day. „Goot Maister Edies Ochiltrees” —

„Edie Ochiltree; nae maister — your puir bedesmen and the king's,” answered the Blue-gown.

„Awell den, goot Edie, what do you think of all dis?”

„I was just thinking it was very kind (for I darena say very simple) o' your honour to gie thae twa rich gentles, wha hae lands and lairdships, and siller without end, this grand pose o' silver and treasure, (three times tried in the fire, as the Scripture expresses it,) that might hae made yoursel and ony twa or three honest bodies beside, as happy and content as the day was lang.”

„Indeed, Edie, mine honest friends, dat is very true; only I did not know, that is, I was not sure, where to find the gelt myself.”

„What! was it not by your honour's advice and council that Monkbarns and the knight of Knockwinnock came here, then?”

„Aha — yes — but it was by another circumstance. I did not know dat dey would have found de treasure, mein friend; though I did guess, by such a tintamarre, and cough, and sneeze, and groan, among de spirit one other night here, dat dere might be treasure and bullion hereabout. Ach, mein himmel! de spirit will hoan and groan over his golt, as

if he were a Dutch burgomaster counting his dollars after a great dinner at de Stadt-haus."

"And do you really believe the like o' that, Mr Dusterdevil? — a skeelfu man like you — hout fie!"

"Mein friend, I believed it no more than you and no man at all, till I did hear them hoan and moan and groan myself on de other night, and till I did this day see de cause, which was an great chest all full of de pure silver from Mexico — and what would you ave me think den?"

"And what would you give to ony ane that would help you to such another kistfu' o' silver?"

"Give? — mein himmel! — one great big quarter of it."

"Now, if the secret were mine," said the mendicant, "I wad stand out for a half; for you see, though I am but a puir ragged body, and couldna carry silver or gowd to sell for fear of being ta'en up, yet I could find mony folk would pass it awa' for me at unco easier profit than ye're thinking on."

"Ach, himmel! — Mein goot friend, what was it I said? — I did mean to say you should have de tree quarter for your half, and the one quarter to be my fair half."

"No, no, Mr Dusterdevil, we will divide

equally what we find, like brother and brother. Now look at this board that I just flung into the dark aisle out o' the way, while Monkbarns was glowering ower a' the silver yonder. He's a sharp chiel Monkbarns. I was glad to keep the like o' this out o' his sight. Ye'll maybe can read the character better than me — I am nae that book-learned, at least I'm no that muckle in practice."

With this modest declaration of ignorance, Ochiltree brought forth from behind a pillar the cover of the box or chest of treasure, which, when forced from its hinges, had been carelessly flung aside during the ardour of curiosity to ascertain the contents which it concealed, and had been afterwards, as it seems, secreted by the mendicant. There was a word and a number upon the plank, and the beggar made them more distinct by spitting upon his ragged blue handkerchief, and rubbing off the clay by which the inscription was obscured. It was in the ordinary black letter.

"Can ye mak ought o't?" said Edie to the Adept.

"S," said the philosopher, like a child getting his lesson in the primer; "S, T, A, R, C, H, — *Starch* — dat is what de women-washers put into the neckerchers, and de shirt collar."

"Starch!" enchoed Ochiltree; „na, na, Mr

Dusterdevil, ye are mair of a conjuror than a clerk — it's *search*, man, *search* — See there's the *Ye* clear and distinct."

"Aha! — I see it now — it is *Search* — number one. Mein himmel, then there must be a number two, mein goot friend; for *search* is what you call to seek and dig, and this is but number one! — Mine wort, there is one great big prize in de wheel for us, goot Mais-ter Ochiltree."

"Aweel, it maybe sae — but we canna howk for't enow — we hae nae shools, for they hae ta'en them a' awa — and it's like some o' them will be sent back to fling the earth into the hole, and make a' things trig again. But an ye'll sit down wi' me a while in the wood, I'll satisfy your honour that ye hae just lighted on the only man in the country that could hae tauld about Malcolm Misticot and his hidden treasure — But first we'll rub out the letters on this board, for fear it tell tales."

And, by the assistance of his knife, the beggar erased and defaced the characters so as to make them quite unintelligible, and then daubed the board with clay so as to obliterate all traces of the erasure.

Dousterswivel stared at him in ambiguous silence. There was an intelligence and alacrity about all the old man's movements, which in-

licated a person that could not be easily overreached, and yet (for even rogues acknowledge in some degree the spirit of precedence,) our Adept felt the disgrace of playing a secondary part, and dividing winnings with so mean an associate. His appetite for gain, however, was sufficiently sharp to overpower his offended pride, and though far more an impostor than a dupe, he was not without a certain degree of personal faith even in the gross superstitions by means of which he imposed upon others. Still, being accustomed to act as a leader on such occasions, he felt humiliated at feeling himself in the situation of a vulture marshalled to his prey by a carrion-crow. — Let me, however, hear his story to an end, thought Dousterswivel, and it will be hard if I do not make mine account in it better, as Maister Edie Ochiltrees makes proposes.

The Adept, thus transformed into a pupil from a teacher of the mystic art, followed Ochiltree in passive acquiescence to the Prior's Oak — a spot, as the reader may remember, at a short distance from the ruins, where the German sat down, and in silence waited the old man's communication.

„Maister Dustandsnível,” said the narrator, „it's an unco while since I heard this business treated anent — for the lairds of Knockwinnock,

neither Sir Arthur, nor his father, nor his grandfather, and I mind a wee bit about them a', liked to hear it spoken about — nor they dinna like it yet — but nae matter, ye may be sure it was clattered about in the kitchen, like ony thing else in a great house, though it were forbidden in the ha' — and sae I hae heard the circumstance rehearsed by auld servants in the family, and in thir present days, when things o' that auld-warld sort are na keepit in mind round winter fire sides as they used to be, I question if there's ony body in the country can tell the tale but mysel — aye, out taken the laird himsel, for there's a parchment-book about it, as I have heard, in the Charter-room at Knockwinnock Castle."

"Well, all dat is vary well — but get you on with your stories, mine goot friend," said Dousterswivel.

"A weel, ye see," continued the mendicant, "this was a job in the auld times o' rugging and riving through the hail country, when it was ilka ane for himsel, and God for us a', when nae man wanted property if he had strength to take it, or had it langer than he had power to keep it. It was just he ower her, and she ower him, which ever could win upmost, a' through the east country here, and

nae doubt through the rest o' Scotland in the self and same manner.

“Sae in these days Sir Richard Wardour cam into the land, and that was the first o' the name ever was in this country. — There's been mony o' them sin' syne; and the maist, like him they ca'd Hell-inharness, and the rest o' them, are sleeping down in yon ruins. They were a proud dour set o' men, but unco brave, and aye stood up for the weel o' the country, God sain them a' — there's no muckle popery in that wish. They ca'd them the Norman Wardours, though they cam frae the south to this country — So this Sir Richard, that they ca'd Red hand, drew up wi' the auld Knockwinnock o' that day, for then they were Knockwinnocks of that ilk, and wad fain marry his only daughter that was to have the castle and the land. Laith, laith was the lass — (Sybil Knockwinnock they ca'd her, that tauld me the tale,) laith, laith was she to gae into the match, for she had fa'en a wee ower thick wi' a cousin o' her ain that her father had some ill-will to, and sae it was, that after she had been married to Sir Richard jimp four months, — for marry him she maun it's like — y'ell no hinder her gi'eing them a present o' a bonny knave bairn. Then there was siccan o ca' thro', as the like was never seen; and she's be burnt,

and he's be slain, was the best words o' their mouths. But it was a' sowdered up again some gait, and the bairn was sent awa' and bred up near the Highlands, and grew up to be a fine wanle fallow, like mony ane that comes o' the wrang side o' the blanket; and Sir Richard wi' the Red-hand, he had a fair offspring o' his ain, and a' was lound and quiet till his head was laid in the ground. But then down came Malcolm Misticot — (Sir Arthur says it should be *Misbegot*, but they aye ca'd him Misticot that spoke o't lang syne,) down came this Malcolm, the love-begot, wi' a string o' lang-legged Highlanders at his heels, that's aye ready for ony body's mischief, and he threeps the castle and lands are his ain as his mother's eldest son, and turns a' the Wardours out to the hill. There was a sort of fighting and blude-spilling about it, for the gentles took different sides, but Malcolm had the uppermost for a lang time, and keepit the castle of Knockwinnock and strengthened it, and built that muckle tower, that they ca' Misticot's tower to this day."

"Mine goot friend, old Mr Edie Ochiltree," interrupted the German, "this is all as one like de long histories of a baron of sixteen quarters in mine countries, but I would as rather hear of de silver and gold."

„Why, ye see this Malcolm was weel helped by an uncle, a brother o' his father's, that was prior o' St Ruth here, and muckle treasure they gathered between them, to secure the succession of their house in the lands of Knockwinnock — Folk said, that the monks in thae days had the art of multiplying metals — at ony rate they were very rich. At last it cam to this, that the young Wardour, that was Red-hand's son, challenged Misticot to fight with him in the lists as they ca'd them — that's no lists or tailor's runds and selvedges o' claith, but a paling thing they set up for them to fight in like game-cocks. Aweel, Misticot was beaten, and at his brother's mercy — but he wadna touch his life for the blood of Knockwinnock that was in baith their veins: so Malcolm was compelled to turn a monk, and he died soon after in the priory of pure despite and vexation. Naebody ever kend whare his uncle the prior earded him, or what he did wi' his gowd and silver, for he stood on the right o' halie kirk, and wad gie nae account to ony body. But the prophecy gat abroad in the country, that whenever Misticot's grave was fund out, the estate of Knockwinnock should be lost and won.”

„Ach, mine goot old friend, Maister Edie, and dat is not so very unlikely, if Sir Arthurs

will quarrel wid his goot friends to please Mr Oldenbuck — And so you do tink dat dis golds and silvers belonged to goot Mr Malcolm Mishdigoat?"

"Troth do I, Mr Dousterdevil."

"And you do believe dat dere is more of dat sorts behind?"

"By my certie do I — How can it be otherwise — *Search — No. 1.* — that is as much as to say, search and ye'll find number twa — besides, yon kist is only silver, and I aye heard that Misticot's pose had muckle yellow gowd in't."

"Den, mine goot friends," said the Adept, jumping up hastily, "why do we not set about our little job directly?"

"For twa gude reasons," answered the beggar, who quietly kept his sitting posture; "first, because, as I said before, we have naething to dig wi', for they hae ta'en awa' the picks and schools; and, secondly, because there will be a wheen idle gowks coming to glower at the hole as lang as it is day-light, and maybe the laird may send somebody to fill it up — and ony way we wad be catched. But if you will meet me on this place at twal o'clock wi' a dark lantern, I'll hae tools ready, and we'll gang quietly about our job our twa sells, and naebody the wiser for't."

„Be — be — but mine goot friend,” said Dousterswivel, from whose recollection his former nocturnal adventure was not to be altogether erased, even by the splendid hopes which Edie’s narrative held forth, „it is not so goot or so safe to be about goot Maister Mishdigoat’s grave at dat time of night — you have forgot how I told you de spirits did hoan and moan dere. I do assure you, dere is disturbance dere.”

„If ye’re afraid of ghaists,” answered the mendicant coolly, „I’ll do the job mysel, and bring your share o’ the siller to ony place ye like to appoint.”

„No — no — mine excellent old Mr Edie, — too much trouble for you — I will not have dat — I will come myself — and it will be bettermost; for, mine old friend, it was I, Herman Dousterswivel, discovered Maister Mishdigoat’s grave when I was looking for a place as to put away some little trumpery coins, just to play one little trick on my dear friend Sir Arthur, for a little sport and pleasures — yes, I did take some what you call rubbish, and did discover Maister Mishdigoat’s own monumentsh — It is like dat he meant I should be his heirs — so it would not be civility in me not to come mineself for mine inheritance.”

„At twal o’clock, then,” said the mendicant,

"we meet under this tree — I'll watch for a while and see that naebody meddless wi' the grave — it's only saying the lairds forbade it — then get my bit supper frae Ringan the poinder up by, and leave to sleep in his barn, and I'll slip out at night and ne'er be mist."

"Do so, mine goot Maister Edie, aad I will meet you here on this very place, though all de spirits should moan and sneeze deir very brains out."

So saying, he shook hands with the old man, and, with this mutual pledge of fidelity to their appointment, they separated for the present.


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CHAPTER XXV.

— *See thou shake the bags  
Of hoarding abbots; angels imprisoned  
Set thou at liberty —  
Bell, book, and candle, shall not drive me  
back,  
If gold and silver beckon to come on —  
King John.*

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THE night set in stormy, with wind and occasional showers of rain. "Eh sirs," said the old mendicant, as he took his place on the sheltered side of the large oak-tree to wait for his associate — "Eh sirs, but human nature's a wilful and a wilyard thing! — is it not an unco lucre o' gain wad bring this Dusterdive out in a blast o' wind like this, at twal o'clock at night, to thir wild gousty wa's? — and am I a bigger fule than himsel to bide here waiting for him?"

Having made these sage reflections, he wrap-



ped himself close in his cloak, and fixed his eye on the moon as she waded amid the stormy and dusky clouds, which the wind from time to time drove across her surface. The melancholy and uncertain gleams that she shot from between the passing shadows fell full upon the rifted arches and shafted windows of the old building, which were thus for an instant made distinctly visible in their ruinous state, and anon became again a dark, undistinguished, and shadowy mass. The little lake had its share of these transient beams of light, and shewed its waters broken, whitened, and agitated under the passing storm, which, when the clouds swept over the moon, were only distinguished by their sullen and murmuring plash against the beach. The wooded glen repeated to every successive gust that hurried through its narrow trough, the deep and various groan with which the trees replied to the whirlwind, and the sound sunk again, as the blast passed away, into a faint and passing murmur, resembling the sighs of an exhausted criminal after the first pangs of his torture are over. In these sounds, superstition might have found ample gratification for that state of excited terror which she fears and yet loves. But such feelings made no part of Ochiltree's composition. His mind wandered back to the scenes of his youth.



“I have kept guard on the outposts baith in Germany and America,” he said to himself, “in mony a waur night than this, and when I kend there was maybe a dozen of their riflemen in the thicket before me. But I was aye gleg at my duty — naebody ever catched Edie sleeping.”

As he muttered thus to himself, he instinctively shouldered his trusty pike-staff, assumed the port of a centinel on duty, and as a step advanced towards the tree, called, with a tone assorting better with his military reminiscences than his present state — “Stand — who goes there?”

“De devil, goot Edie,” answered Dousterswivel, “why does you speak so loud as a baarenhafter, or what you call a factionary — I mean a centinel?”

“Just because I thought I was a centinel at that moment — Here’s an awesome night — hae ye brought a lantern and a pock for the siller?”

“Aye — aye — mine goot friend, here it is — my pair of what you call saddle-bag — one side will be for you, one side for me — I will put dem on my horse to save you de trouble, as you are old man.”

“Have you a horse here, then?”

“O yes, mine friend, tied yonder by de stile.”



“Weel, I hae just ae word to the bargain — there sall nane o’ my gear gang on your beast’s back.”

“What was it as you would be afraid of?”

“Only of losing sight of horse, man, and money.”

“Does you know dat you make one gentleman out to be one great rogue?”

“Mony gentlemen,” replied Ochiltree, “can make that out for themselves — but what’s the sense of quarrelling? — if ye want to gang on, gang on — if not, I’ll gae back to the gude ait-straw in Ringan Aikwood’s barn that I left wi’ right ill-will enow, and I’ll pit back the pick and shool whar I got them.”

Dousterswivel deliberated a moment, whether, by suffering Edie to depart, he might not secure the whole of the expected wealth for his own exclusive use. But the want of digging implements, the uncertainty whether, if he had them, he could clear out the grave to a sufficient depth without assistance, and, above all, the reluctance which he felt, owing to the experience of the former night, to venture alone on the terrors of Misticot’s grave, satisfied him the attempt would be hazardous. Endeavouring, therefore, to assume his usual cajoling tone, though internally incensed, he begged “his goot friend, Maister Edie Ochiltree, would lead the way,



and assured him of his acquiescence in all such an excellent friend could propose."

"Aweel, aweel then," said Edie, "take gude care o' your feet amang the lang grass and the loose stanes — I wish we may get the light keepit in neist, wi' this fearsome wind — but there's a blink o' moonlight at times."

Thus saying, old Edie, closely accompanied by the Adept, led the way toward the ruins, but presently made a full halt in front of them. "Ye're a learned man, Mr Dusterdivel, and ken muckle o' the marvellous works o' nature — now will ye tell me ae thing? — D'ye believe in ghaists and spirits that walk the earth? — aye, or no?"

"Now, goot Mr Edie, is this a times or a places for such a question?"

"Indeed is it, baith the tane and the tother, Mr Dustanshovel; for I maun fairly tell ye, there's reports that auld Misticot walks. Now this wad be an uncanny night to meet him in, and wha kens if he wad be ower weel pleased wi' our purpose of visiting his pose?"

"*Alle guter Geister*" — muttered the Adept the rest of the conjuration being lost in a tremulous warble of his voice, — "I do desires you not to speak so, Mr Edie, for, from all I heard dat one other night, I do much believes" —



“Now I,” said Ochiltree, entering the chancel, and flinging abroad his arm with an air of defiance, “I wadna gie the crack o’ my thumb for him were he to appear at this moment — he’s but a disembodied spirit as we are embodied anes.”

“For the love of heavens,” said Dousterswivel, “say nothing at all neither about somebodies or nobodies.”

“Aweel,” said the beggar, (expanding the shade of the lantern,) “here’s the stane, and, spirit or no spirit, I’se be a wee bit deeper in the grave” — and he jumped into the place from which the precious chest had that morning been removed. After striking a few strokes, he tired, or affected to tire, and said to his companion, “I’m auld and failed now, and canna keep at it — Time about’s fair play, neighbour — ye maun get in and tak the shool a bit, and shool out the loose earth, and then I’ll tak turn about wi’ you.”

Dousterswivel accordingly took the place which the beggar had evacuated, and toiled with all the zeal that awakened avarice, mingled with the anxious wish to finish the undertaking and leave the place as soon as possible, could inspire in a mind at once greedy, suspicious, and timorous.

Edie, standing much at his ease by the side



of the hole, contented himself with exhorting his associate to labour hard. "My certie! few ever wrought for siccan a day's wage; an it be but — say the tenth part o' the size o' the kist No. 1., it will double its value, being filled wi' gowd instead o' silver. — Odd, ye work as if ye had been bred to pick and shool — ye could win your round half-crown ilka day. Tak care o' your taes wi' that stane!" giving a kick to a large one which the Adept had heaved out with difficulty, and which Edie pushed back again, to the great annoyance of his shins.

Thus exhorted by the mendicant, Douster-swivel struggled and laboured among the stones and stiff clay, toiling like a horse, and internally blaspheming in German. When such an unhallowed syllable escaped his lips, Edie changed his battery upon him.

"O dinna swear, dinna swear! — wha ken's wha's listening? — Eh! gude guide us, what's yon! — Hout, it's just a branch of ivy flighter-ing awa frae the wa'; when the moon was in, it lookit unco like a dead man's arm wi' a taper in't; I thought it was Misticot himsel. But never mind, work you away — fling the earth weel up bye out o' the gate — odd, if ye're no as clean a worker at a grave as Will Winnett himsel! What gars ye stop now? — ye're just at the very bit for a chance."



“Stop!” said the German in a tone of anger and disappointment, “why, I am down at de rocks dat de cursed ruins (God forgife me!) is founded upon.”

“Weel,” said the beggar, “that’s the likelies bit of ony — it will be but a muckle through<sup>t</sup> stane laid down to kiver the gowd; tack the pick-till’t, and pit mair strength, man — ae gude downright devel will split it, I’s e warrant ye — Aye, that will do — Odd, he comes on wi’ Wallace’s straiks!”

In fact, the Adept, moved by Edie’s exhortations, fetched two or three desperate blows — and succeeded in breaking, not indeed that, against which he struck, which, as he had already conjectured, was the solid rock, but the implement which he wielded, jarring at the same time his arms up to the shoulder-blades.

“Hurra, boys! — there goes Ringan’s pick-axe!” cried Edie; it’s a shame o’ the Fairport folk to sell siccan frail gear. Try the shool — at it again, Mr Dusterdivel.”

The Adept without reply scrambled out of the pit, which was now about six feet deep, and addressed his associate in a voice that trembled with anger. “Does you know, Maister Edies Ochiltrees, who it is you put off your gibes and your jests upon?”



“Brawly, Mr Dusterdivel — brawly do I ken ye, and has done mony a day; but there’s nae jesting in the case, for I am wearying to see a’ our treasures; we should hae had baith ends o’ the pockmanky filled by this time — I hope it’s bowk aneugh to haud a’ the gear.”

“Look you, you base old person, if you do put another jest upon me, I will cleave your skull-piece with this shovels!”

“And whare wad my hands and my pike-staff be a’ the time? — Hout, tout, Maister Dusterdivel, I hae na lived sae lang in the warld neither to be shooled out o’t that gate. What ails ye to be cankered, man, wi’ your friends? I’ll wager I’ll find out the treasure in a minute;” and he jumped into the pit and took up the spade.

“I do swear to you,” said the Adept, whose suspicions were now fully awake, “that if you have played me one big trick, I will give you one big beating, Mr Edies.”

“Hear till him now,” said Ochiltree; “he kens how to gar folk find out the gear — Odd, I’m thinking he’s been drilled that way himsel some day.”

At this insinuation, which alluded obviously to the former scene betwixt himself and Sir Arthur, the philosopher lost the slender remnant of patience he had left, and being of violent



passions, heaved up the truncheon of the broken mattock to discharge it upon the old man's head. The blow would in all probability have been fatal, had not he at whom it was aimed exclaimed in a stern and firm voice, "Shame to ye, man! — Do ye think Heaven or earth will suffer ye to murder an auld man that might be your father? — Look behind you, man."

Dousterswivel turned instinctively, and beheld, to his utter astonishment, a tall dark figure standing close behind him. The apparition gave him no time to proceed by exorcism or otherwise, but, having instantly recourse to the *voix de fait*, took measure of the Adept's shoulders three or four times with blows so substantial, that he fell under the weight of them, and remained senseless for some minutes between fear and stupefaction. When he came to himself, he was alone in the ruined chancel, lying upon the soft and damp earth which had been thrown out of Misticot's grave. He raised himself with a confused sensation of anger, pain, and terror, and it was not until he had sat upright for some minutes that he could arrange his ideas sufficiently to recollect how he came there, or with what purpose. As his recollection returned, he could have little doubt that the bait held out to him by Ochiltree to bring him into that solitary spot, the sarcasms by



which he had provoked him into a quarrel, and the ready assistance which he had at hand for terminating it in the manner in which it had ended, were all parts of a concerted plan to bring disgrace and damage on Herman Dousterswivel. He could hardly suppose that he was indebted for the fatigue, anxiety, and beating which he had undergone, purely to the malice of Edie Ochiltree singly, but concluded that the mendicant had acted a part assigned to him by some person of greater importance. His suspicions hesitated between Oldbuck and Sir Arthur Wardour. The former had been at no pains to conceal a marked dislike of him — but the latter he had deeply injured; and although he judged that Sir Arthur did not know the extent of his wrongs towards him, yet it was easy to suppose he had gathered enough of the truth to make him desirous of revenge. Ochiltree had alluded to at least one circumstance which the Adept had every reason to suppose was private between Sir Arthur and himself, and therefore must have been learned from the former. The language of Oldbuck also intimated a conviction of his knavery, which Sir Arthur heard without making any animated defence. Lastly, the way in which Dousterswivel supposed the baronet to have exercised his revenge, was not inconsistent with the practice of other coun-



tries with which the Adept was better acquainted than with those of North Britain. With him, as with many bad men, to suspect an injury, and to nourish the purpose of revenge, was one and the same movement. And before Dousterswivel had fairly recovered his legs, he had mentally sworn the ruin of his benefactor, which, unfortunately, he possessed too much the power of accelerating.

But although a purpose of revenge floated through his brain, it was no time to indulge such speculations. The hour, the place, his own situation, and perhaps the presence or near neighbourhood of his assailants, made self-preservation the Adept's first object. The lantern had been thrown down and extinguished in the scuffle. The wind, which formerly howled so loudly through the aisles of the ruin, had now greatly fallen, lulled by the rain, which was descending very fast. The moon, from the same cause, was totally obscured, and though Dousterswivel had some experience of the ruins, and knew that he must endeavour to regain the eastern door of the chancel, yet the confusion of his ideas was such, that he hesitated for some time ere he could ascertain in what direction he was to seek it. In this perplexity, the suggestions of superstition taking the advantage of darkness and his evil conscience, began again



to present themselves to his disturbed imagination. "But bah!" quoth he valiantly to himself, "it is all nonsense — all one part of the damn big trick and imposture. Deivil! that one thick-sculled Scotch baronet, as I have led by the nose for five year, should cheat Herman Dousterswivel!"

As he had come to this conclusion, an incident occurred which tended greatly to shake the grounds on which he had adopted it. Amid the melancholy *sough* of the dying wind, and the plash of the rain-drops on leaves and stones, arose, and apparently at no great distance from the listener, a strain of vocal music so sad and solemn, as if the departed spirits of the churchmen who had once inhabited these deserted ruins, were mourning the solitude and desolation to which their hallowed precincts had been abandoned. Dousterswivel, who had now got upon his feet, and was groping around the wall of the chancel, stood rooted to the ground on the occurrence of this new phenomenon. Each faculty of his soul seemed for the moment concentrated in the sense of hearing, and all rushed back with the unanimous information, that the deep, wild, and prolonged chaunt which he now heard, was the appropriate music of one of the most solemn dirges of the church of Rome. Why performed in such a solitude, and



by what class of choristers, were questions which the terrified imagination of the adept, stirred with all the German superstitions of nixies, oak-kings, were-wolves, hobgoblins, black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey, durst not even attempt to solve.

Another of his senses was soon engaged in the investigation. At the extremity of one of the transepts of the church, at the bottom of a few descending steps, was a small iron-grated door, opening, as far as he recollected, to a sort of low vault or sacristy. As he cast his eye in the direction of the sound, he observed a strong reflection of red light glimmering through these bars, and against the steps which descended to them. Dousterswivel stood a moment uncertain what to do; then, suddenly forming a desperate resolution, he moved down the aisle to the place from which the light proceeded.

Fortified with the sign of the cross, and as many exorcisms as his memory could recover, he advanced to the grate, from which, unseen, he could see what passed in the interior of the vault. As he approached with timid and uncertain steps, the chaunt, after one or two wild and prolonged cadences, died away into profound silence. The grate, when he reached it, presented a singular spectacle in the interior of the sacristy — An open grave, with four tall



flambeaus, each about six feet high, placed at the four corners — a bier, having a corpse in its shroud, the arms folded upon the breast, rested upon tressels at one side of the grave, as if ready to be interred — A priest, dressed in his cope and stole, held open the service-book — another churchman in his vestments bore a holy-water sprinkler — and two boys in white surplices held censers with incense — a man, of a figure once tall and commanding, but now bent with age or infirmity, stood alone and nearest to the coffin, attired in deep mourning — Such were the most prominent figures of the group. At a little distance, were two or three persons of both sexes, attired in long mourning hoods and cloaks; and five or six others in the same lugubrious dress, still farther removed from the body, around the walls of the vault, stood ranged in motionless order, each bearing in his hand a huge torch of black wax. The smoky light from so many flambeaus, by the red and indistinct atmosphere which it spread around, gave a hazy, dubious, and, as it were, phantom-like appearance to the outlines of this singular apparition. The voice of the priest — loud, clear, and sonorous, now recited from the breviary which he held in his hand, those solemn words which the ritual of the Catholic church has consecrated to the ren-



dering of dust to dust. Meanwhile, Douster-swivel, the place, the hour, and the surprise considered, still remained uncertain, whether what he saw was substantial, or an unearthly representation of the rites, to which, in former times, these walls were familiar, but which are now rarely practised in Protestant countries, and almost never in Scotland. He was uncertain whether to abide the conclusion of the ceremony, or to endeavour to regain the chancel, when a change in his position made him visible through the grate to one of the attendant mourners. The person who first espied him, indicated his discovery to the individual who stood apart and nearest to the coffin by a sign, and upon his making a sign in reply, two of the group detached themselves, and, gliding along with noiseless steps, as if fearing to disturb the service, unlocked and opened the grate which separated them from the adept. Each took him by an arm, and exerting a degree of force, which he would have been incapable of resisting had his fear permitted him to attempt opposition, they placed him on the ground in the chancel, and sat down one on each side of him as if to detain him. Satisfied he was in the power of mortals like himself, the adept would have put some questions to them; but while one pointed to the vault, from which the



sound of the priest's voice was distinctly heard, the other placed his finger upon his lips in token of silence, a hint which the German thought it most prudent to obey. And thus they detained him until a loud Alleluia, pealing through the deserted arches of St Ruth, closed the singular ceremony which it had been his fortune to witness.

When the hymn had died away with all its echoes, the voice of one of the sable personages under whose guard the adept had remained, said, in a familiar tone and dialect, "Dear sirs, Mr Dousterswivel, is this you? could not ye have let us ken an ye had wussed till hae been present at the ceremony? — My lord couldna tak it weel your coming blinking and jinking in, in that fashion."

"In de name of all dat is gootness, tell me what you are?" interrupted the German in his return.

"What I am? why, wha should I be but Ringan Aikwood, the Knockwinnock poinder? — And what are you doing here at this time o' night, unless ye were come to attend the leddy's burial?"

"I do declare to you, mine goot Poinder Aikwood," said the German, raising himself up, "that I have been this vary nights murdered, robbed, and but in fears of my life."



«Robbed! wha wad do sic a deed here? — Murdered! odd, ye speak pretty blithe for a murdered man. — Put in fear! what put you in fear, Mr Dousterswivel?»

«I will tell you, Maister Poinder Aikwood Ringan, just dat old miscreant dog villain, blue-gown, as you call Edie Ochiltrees.»

«I'll ne'er believe that,» answered Ringan; «Edie was ken'd to me, and my father before me, for a true, loyal, and soothfast man; and mair by token, he's sleeping up yonder in our barn, and has been since ten at e'en — Sae touch ye wha liket, Mr Dousterswivel, and whether ony body touched ye or no, I'm sure Edie's sackless.»

«Maister Ringan Aikwood Poinders, I do not know what you call sackless, but let alone all de oils and de soot dat you say he has, and I will tell you I was dis night robbed of fifty pounds by your oil and sooty friend, Edies Ochiltree; and he is no more in your barn even now dan I ever shall be in de kingdom of heafen.»

«Weel, sir, if ye will gae up wi' me, as the burial company has dispersed, we'se mak ye doun a bed at the lodge, and we'se see if Edie's at the barn. There were twa wild-looking chaps left the auld kirk when we were coming up wi' the corpse, that's certain, and the priest,



wha likes ill that ony heretics should look on at our church ceremonies, sent twa o' the riding saulies after them, sae we'll hear a' about it frae them."

Thus speaking, the kindly apparition, with the assistance of the mute personage, who was his son, disencumbered himself of his cloak, and prepared to escort Dousterswivel to the place of that rest which the adept so much needed.

"I will apply to the magistrates to-morrow," said the adept; "oder, I will have de law put in force against all de peoples."

While he thus muttered vengeance against the cause of his injury, he tottered from among the ruins, supporting himself on Ringan and his son, whose assistance his state of weakness rendered very necessary.

When they were clear of the priory, and had gained the little meadow in which it stands, Dousterswivel could perceive the torches which had caused him so much alarm, issuing in irregular procession from the ruins, and glancing their light, like that of the *ignis fatuus*, on the banks of the lake. After moving along the path for some short space with a fluctuating and irregular motion, the lights were at once extinguished.



"We aye put out the torches at the halie-cross well on sic occasions," said the forester to his guest; and accordingly no farther visible sign of the procession offered itself to Dousterswivel, although his ear could catch the distant and decreasing echo of horses' hoofs in the direction towards which the mourners had bent their course.



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## CHAPTER XXVI.

*O weel may the boatie row,  
 And better may she speed,  
 And weel may the boatie row  
 That earns the bairnies' bread.  
 The boatie rows, the boatie rows,  
 The boatie rows weel,  
 And lightsome be their life that bear  
 The merlin and the creel.*

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WE must now introduce our reader to the interior of the fisher's cottage mentioned in chapter ninth of the first volume of this edifying history. I wish I could say that its inside was well arranged, decently furnished, or tolerably clean. On the contrary, I am compelled to admit, there was confusion, — there was dilapidation, — there was dirt good store. Yet, with all this, there was about the inmates,

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Luckie Mucklebackit and her family, an appearance of ease, plenty, and comfort, that seemed to warrant their own sluttish proverb, "The clartier the cosier." A huge fire, though the season was summer, occupied the hearth, and served at once for affording light, heat, and the means of preparing food. The fishing had been successful, and the family, with customary improvidence, had, since unlading the cargo, continued an unintermitting operation of broiling and frying that part of the produce reserved for home consumption, and the bones and fragments lay on the wooden trenchers, mingled with morsels of broken bannocks and shattered mugs of half-drunk beer. The stout and athletic form of Maggie herself, bustling here and there among a pack of half-grown girls and younger children, of whom she chuckled one now here and another now there, with an exclamation of "Get out o' the gate, ye little sorrow!" was well contrasted with the passive and half-stupified look and manner of the husband's mother, a woman advanced to the latest stage of human life, who was seated in her wonted chair close by the fire, the warmth of which she coveted, yet hardly seemed to be sensible of, now muttering to herself, now smiling vacantly to the children as they pulled the strings of her *toy* or close



cap, or twitched her blue checked apron. With her distaff in her bosom, and her spindle in her hand, she plied lazily and mechanically the old-fashioned Scottish trift, according to the old-fashioned Scottish manner. The younger children, crawling among the feet of the elder, watched the progress of Grannie's spindle as it twisted, and now and then ventured to interrupt its progress as it danced upon the floor in those vagaries which the more regulated spinning-wheel has now so universally superseded, that even the fated Princess of the fairy-tale might roam through all Scotland without the risk of piercing her hand with a spindle, and dying of the wound. Late as the hour was, (and it was long past midnight) the whole family were still on foot, and far from proposing to go to bed; the dame was still busy broiling car-cakes on the girdle, and the elder girl, the half-naked mermaid elsewhere commemorated, was preparing a pile of Findhorn haddocks, (that is, haddocks smoked with green wood) to be eaten along with these relishing provisions.

While they were thus employed, a slight tap at the door, accompanied with the question, "Are ye up yet, sirs?" announced a visitor. The answer, "Aye, aye, — come your ways ben, hinny," occasioned the lifting of the latch,



and Jenny Rintherout, the female domestic of our Antiquary, made her appearance.

“Aye, aye,” exclaimed the mistress of the family, — “hegh, sirs! can this be you, Jenny? a sight o’ you’s gude for sair een, lass.”

“O, woman, we’ve been ta’en up wi’ Captain Hector’s wound up bye, that I have na had my fit out ower the door this fortnight; but he’s better now, and auld Caxon sleeps in his room in case he wanted ony thing. Sae, as soon as our auld folk gaed to bed, I e’en snooded my head up a bit, and left the house-door on the latch, in case ony body should be wanting in or out while I was awa, and just cam down the gate to see an’ there was ony cracks amang ye.”

“Aye, aye,” answered Luckie Mucklebackit, “I see ye hae gotten a’ your brows on — ye’re looking about for Steenie now — but he’s no at hame the night — and ye’ll no do for Steenie, lass — a feckless thing like you’s no fit to mainteen a man.”

“Steenie will no do for me,” retorted Jenny, with a toss of her head that might have become a higher born damsel, — “I maun hae a man that can mainteen his wife.”

“Ou aye, hinny — thae’s your landward and burrows-town notions. My certie! fisher-wives



ken better — they keep the man, and keep the house, and keep the siller too, lass."

"A wheen poor drudges ye are, answered the nymph of the land to the nymph of the sea. — "As sune as the keel o' the coble touches the sand, de'il a bit mair will the lazy fisher loons work, but the wives maun kilt their coats, and wade into the surf to tak' the fish ashore. And then the man casts aff the wat and pits on the dry, and sits down wi' his pipe his gill-stoup ahint the ingle like ony auld houdie, and ne'er a turn will he do till the coble's afloat again! — And the wife, she maun get the scull on her back, and awa wi' the fish to the next burrows toun, and scauld and ban wi' ilka wife that will scauld and ban wi' her till it's sauld — and that's the gait fisher-wives live, puir slaving bodies."

"Slaves? gae wa', lass! — Ca' the head o' the house slaves? little ye ken about it, lass — shew me a word my Saunders daur speak, or a turn he daur do about the house, without it be just to tak his meat, and his drink, and his diversion, like ony o' the weans. He has mair sense than to ca' ony thing about the bigging his ain, frae the roostree down to a crackit trencher on the bink. He kens weel aneugh wha feeds him and cleeds him, and keeps a' tight thack and rape when his coble



is jowing awa' in the Firth, poor fallow. Na, na, lass — them that sell the goods guide the purse — them that guide the purse rule the house — shew me ane o' your bits o' farmer bodies, that wad let their wife drive the stock to the market, and ca' in the debts. Na, na."

"Aweel, aweel, Maggie, ilka land has its ain lauch — but where's Steenie the night, when a's come and gane? And where's the gudeman?"

"I hae puttin' the gudeman to his bed, for he was e'en sair forfairn, and Steenie's awa' out about some barns-breaking wi' the auld Gaberlunzie, Edie Ochiltree — they'll be in sune, and ye can sit down."

"Troth, gudewife, (taking a seat,) I hae na that muckle time to stop — but I maun tell ye about the news — Ye'll hae heard o' the muckle kist o' gowd that Sir Arthur has fund down bye at St Ruth? — He'll be grander than ever now — he'll no can haud down his head to sneeze, for fear o' seeing his shoon."

"Ou aye — a' the country's heard o' that; but auld Edie says they ca' it ten times mair than ever was o't, and he saw them howk it up. Odd, it would be lang or a puir body that needed it got sic a windsa'."

"Na, that's sure aneugh. — And ye'll hae heard o' the Countess o' Glenallan being dead and lying in state, and how she's to be buried



at St Ruth's as this night fa's, wi' torch-light; and a' the papists, servants, and Ringan Aikwood, that's a papist too, are to be there, and it will be the grandest shew ever was seen."

"Troth, hinny," answered the Naiad, "if they let naebody but papists come there, it'll no be muckle o' a shew in this country; for the auld harlot, as honest Mr Blattergowl ca's her, has few that drink o' her cup o' enchantments in this corner of our chosen lands. — But what can ail them to bury the auld carline (a rudas wife she was) in the night time? — I dare say our gudemither will ken."

Here she exalted her voice, and exclaimed twice or thrice, "Gudemither! gudemither!" but, lost in the apathy of age and deafness, the aged sybil she addressed continued plying her spindle without understanding the appeal made to her.

"Speak to your grandmither, Jenny — odd, I wad rather hail the coble half a mile aff, and the nor-wast wind whistling again in my teeth."

"Grannie," said the little mermaid, in a voice to which the old woman was better accustomed, "minnie wants to ken what for thae Glenallan folk aye bury by candle-light in the ruins of St Ruth?"

The old woman paused in the act of twirling



the spindle, turned round to the rest of the party, lifted her withered, trembling, and clay-coloured hand, raised up her ashen-coloured and wrinkled face, which the quick motion of two light-blue eyes chiefly distinguished from the visage of a corpse, and as if catching at any touch of association with the living world, answered, "What gars the Glenallan family inter their dead by torch-light, said the lassie? — Is there a Glenallan dead e'en now?"

"We might be a' dead aud buried too," said Maggie, "for ony thing ye wad ken about it;" — and then raising her voice to the stretch of her mother-in-law's comprehension, she added, "It's the auld countess, gudemither."

"And is she ca'd hame then at last," said the old woman, in a voice that seemed to be agitated with much more feeling than belonged to her extreme old age, and the general indifference and apathy of her manner — "is she then called to her last account after her lang race o' pride and power? — O God forgie her!"

"But minnie was asking ye," resumed the lesser querist, "what for the Glenallan family aye bury their dead by torchlight?"

"They hae aye dune sae," said the grandmother, "since the time the Great Earl fell in the sair battle o' the Harlaw, when they say the coronach was cried in ae day, from the



mouth o' the Tay to the Buck of the Cabrach, that ye wad hae heard nae other sound but that of lamentation for the great folks that had fa'en fighting against Donald of the Isles. — But the Great Earl's mither was living — they were a doughty and a dour race the women o' the house o' Glenallan — and she wad hae nae coronach cried for her son, but had him laid in the silence o' midnight in his place o' rest, without either drinking the dirgè, or crying the lament. — She said he had killed enow that day he died, for the widows and daughters o' the Highlanders he had slain to cry the coronach for them they had lost and for her son too, and sae she laid him in his grave wi' dry eyes, and without a groan or a wail — And it was thought a proud word o' the family, and they aye stickit by it — and the mair in the latter times, because in the night time they had mair freedom to perform their popish ceremonies by darkness and in secrecy than in the day-light — at least that was the case in my time — they wad hae been disturbed in the day-time baith by the law and the commons of Fairport — they may hae mair freedom now — the world's changed — I whiles hardly ken whether I am standing or sitting, or dead or living."

And looking round the fire, as if in the state



of unconscious uncertainty of which she complained, old Elspeth relapsed into her habitual and mechanical occupation of twirling the spindle.

«Eh sirs!» said Jenny Rintherout, under her breath to her gossip, «it's awsome to hear your gudemither break out in that gait — it's like the dead speaking to the living.»

«Ye're no that far wrang, lass; she minds naething o' what passes the day — but set her on auld tales, and she can speak like a prent buke. She kens mair about the Glenallan family than maist folk — the gudeman's father was their fisher mony a day. Ye maun ken the papists make a great point o' eating fish — it's nae bad part o' their religion that, whatever the rest is — I could aye sell the best o' fish at the best o' prices for the countess's ain table, grace be wi' her! especially on a Friday — But see as our gudemither's hands and lips are ganging — now it's working in her head like barm — she'll speak aneuch the night — whiles she'll no speak a word in a week, unless it be to the bits o' bairns.»

«Heh, Mrs Mucklebackit, she's an awsome wife! — d'ye think she's a'thegither right? — Folk says she downa gang to the kirk, or speak to the minister, and that she was ance a papist, but since her gudeman's been dead naebody



kens what she is — d'ye think yoursel that she's no uncanny?"

"Canny, ye silly tawpie! think ye ae auld wife's less canny than anither, unless it be Ailison Breck — I really couldna in conscience swear for her — I have kent the boxes she set filled wi' partans, when" —

"Whisht, whisht, Maggie, your gudemither's gaun to speak again."

"Was na there some ane o' ye said," asked the old sybil, "or did I dream, or was it revealed to me, that Joscelind, Lady Glenallan, is dead an' buried this night?"

"Yes, gudemither," screamed the daughter-in-law, "it's e'en sae"

"And e'n sae let it be," said old Elspeth; "she's made mony a sair heart in her day — aye, e'en her ain son's — is he living yet?"

"Aye, he's living yet — but how lang he'll live — however, dinna ye mind his coming and asking after you in the spring, and leaving siller?"

"It may be sae, Maggie — I dinna mind — but a handsome gentleman he was, and his father before him. Eh! if his father had lived, they might hae been happy folk! — But he was gane, and the ledy carried it in-ower and out-ower wi' her son, and gart him trow the thing he never suld hae trowed, and do the



thing he has repented a' his life, and will repent still, were his life as lang as this lang and wearisome ane o' mine."

"O what was it, grannie?" — and "What was it, gudemither?" — and "What was it, Luckie Elspeth?" asked the children, the mother, and the visitor, in one breath.

"Never ask what it was, but pray to God that ye are na left to the pride and wilfu'ness o' your ain hearts. They may be as powerful in a cabin as in a castle — I can bear a sad witness to that. — O that weary and fearfu' night! — will it never gang out o' my auld head? — Eh! to see her lying on the floor wi' her lang hair dreeping wi' the salt water! — Heaven will avenge on a' that had to do wi't. — Sirs! is my son out wi' the coble this windy e'en?"

"Na, na, mither — nae coble can keep the sea this wind — he's sleeping in his bed out ower yonder ahint the hallan."

"Is Steenie out at sea then?"

"Na, grannie — Steenie's awa out wi' auld Edie Ochiltree, the gaberlunzie — maybe they'll be gaun to see the burial."

"That canna be," said the mother of the family, — "we kent naething o't till Jock Rand cam in, and tauld us the Aikwoods had warning to attend; they keep thae things unco



private, and they were to bring the corpse a' the way frae the castle, ten miles off, under cloud o' night. She has lain in state this ten days at Glenallan-house, in a grand chamber, a' hung wi' black, and lighted wi' wax cannle."

"God assoilzie her!" ejaculated old Elspeth, her head apparently still occupied by the event of the Countess's death — "She was a hard-hearted woman, but she's gane to account for it a', and His mercy is infinite — God grant she may find it sae!" — And she relapsed into silence, which she did not break again during the rest of the evening.

"I wonder what that auld daft beggar carle and our son Steenie can be doing out in sic a night as this," said Maggie Mucklebackit; and her expression of surprise was echoed by her visitor; "Gang away ane o' ye, hinnies, up to the heugh-head, and gie them a cry in case they're within hearing — the car-cakes will be burnt to a cinder."

The little emissary departed, but in a few minutes came running back with the loud exclamation, "Eh, minnie! eh, grannie! there's a white bogle chasing twa black anes down the heugh!"

A noise of footsteps followed this singular annunciation, and young Steenie Mucklebackit, closely followed by Edie Ochiltree, bounced



into the hut. They were panting and out of breath. The first thing Steenie did was to look for the bar of the door, which his mother reminded him had been broken up for firewood in the hard winter three years ago; for what use, she said, had the like o' them for bars?

"There's naebody chasing us," said the beggar; "we're e'en like the wicked, that flee when no one pursueth."

"Troth, but we were chased," said Steenie, "by a spirit, or something little better."

"It was a man in white on horseback," said Edie, "for the saft ground, that wadna bear the beast, flung him about, I wot that weel; but I didna think my auld legs could have brought me aff as fast; I ran amaist as fast as if I had been at Prestonpans."

"Hout, ye daft'gowks," said Luckie Mucklebackit, "it will hae been some o' the riders at the Countess's burial."

"What!" said Edie, "is the auld Countess buried the night at St Ruth's? — Ou, that wad be the lights and the noise that scarr'd us awa; I wish I had ken'd — I wad hae stude them, and no left the man yonder — but they'll take care o' him. Ye strake ower hard, Steenie — I doubt ye foundered the chield."

"Ne'er a bit," said Steenie, laughing; "he has braw broad shouthers, and I just took the



measure o' them wi' the stang — Odd, if I hadna been something short wi' him, he wad hae knockit your auld harns out, lad."

"Weel, an' I win clear o' this scrape," said Edie, "I'se tempt providence nae mair. But I canna think it an unlawfu' thing to pit a bit trick on sic a land-louping scoundrel, that just lives by tricking honest folk."

"But what are we to do wi' this?" said Steenie, producing a pocket-book.

"Odd guide us, man," said Edie, in great alarm, "what gar'd ye touch the gear? a very leaf o' that pocket-book wad be aneugh to hang us baith."

"I dinna ken," said Steenie; "the book had fa'en out o' his pocket, I fancy, for I fand it amang my feet when I was graping about to set him on his legs again, and just pat it in my pouch to keep it safe; and then cam the tramp o' horse, and you cried 'Rin, rin,' and I had nae mair thought o' the book."

"We maun get it back to the loon some gait or other; ye had better take it yoursel, I think, wi' peep o' light, up to Ringan Aikwood's. I wadna for a hundred pounds it was fund in our hands."

Steenie undertook to do as he was directed.

"A bonny night ye hae made o't, Mr Steenie," said Jenny Rintherout, who, impatient of



remaining so long unnoticed, now presented herself to the young fisherman — “A bonny night ye hae made o’t, tramping about wi’ gabberlunzies, and getting yoursel hunted wi’ worricows, when ye suld hae been sleeping in your bed like your father, honest man.”

This attack called forth a suitable response of rustic raillery from the young fisherman. An attack was now commenced upon the car-cakes and smoked fish, and sustained with great perseverance by assistance of a bicker or two of twopenny ale and a bottle of gin. The mendicant then retired to the straw of an outhouse adjoining, — the children had one by one crept into their nests, — the old grandmother was deposited in her flock bed, — Steenie, notwithstanding his preceding fatigue, had the gallantry to accompany Miss Rintherout to her own mansion, and at what hour he returned the story saith not, — and the matron of the family, having laid the gathering-coal upon the fire, and put things in some sort of order, retired to rest the last of the family.



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CHAPTER XXVII.

— *Many great ones*

*Would part with half their states, to have the
plan*

And credit to beg in the first stile —

Beggar's Bush.

OLD Edie was stirring with the lark, and his first enquiry was after Steenie and the pocket-book. The young fisherman had been under the necessity of attending his father before day-break to avail themselves of the tide, but he had promised, that, immediately on his return, the pocket-book, with all its contents, carefully wrapped up in a piece of sail-cloth, should be delivered by him to Ringan Aikwood, for Dousterswivel, the owner.

The matron had prepared the morning meal

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for the family, and, shouldering her basket of fish, tramped sturdily away towards Fairport. The children were idling around the door, for the day was fair and sun-shiney. The ancient grandame, again seated on her wicker-chair by the fire, had resumed her eternal spindle, wholly unmoved by the yelling and screaming of the children, and the scolding of the mother, which had preceded the dispersion of the family. Edie had arranged his various bags, and was bound for the renewal of his wandering life, but first advanced with due courtesy to take his leave of the ancient crone.

“Gude day to ye, cummer, and mony ane o’ them. I will be back about the fore-end o’ har’st, and I trust to find ye baith haill and fere.”

“Pray that ye may find me in my quiet grave,” said the old woman in a hollow and sepulchral voice, but without the agitation of a single feature.

“Ye’re auld, cummer, and sae am I mysel; but we maun abide His will — we’ll no be forgotten in his good time.”

“Nor our deeds neither,” said the crone; “what’s dune in the body maun be answered in the spirit.”

“I wot that’s true; and I may weel tak the tale hame to mysel, that hae led a misruled and roving life. But ye were aye a canny wife. We’re a’ frail — but ye canna hae sae muckle to bow ye down.”

“Less than I might have had — but mair. O far mair, than wad sink the stoutest brig e’er sailed out o’ Fairport harbour! — Didna somebody say yestreen — at least sae it is borne in on my mind — but auld folk hae weak fancies — did not somebody say that Joscelind, Countess of Glenallan, was departed frae life?”

“They said the truth whaever said it,” answered the mendicant; “she was buried yestreen by torch-light at St Ruth’s, and I, like a fule, gat a gliff wi’ seeing the lights and the riders.”

“It was their fashion since the days of the Great Earl that was killed at Harlaw — They did it to shew scorn that they should die and be buried like other mortals — The wives o’ the house of Glenallan wailed nae wail for the husband, nor the sister for the brother. — But is she e’en ca’d to the lang account?”

“As sure,” answered Edie, “as we maun a’ abide it.”

“Then I’ll unlade my mind, come o’t what will.”

This she spoke with more alacrity than usually attended her expressions, and accompanied her words with an attitude of the hand, as if throwing something from her. She then raised up her form, once tall, and still retaining the appearance of having been so, though bent with age and rheumatism, and stood before the beggar like a mummy animated by some wandering spirit into a temporary resurrection. Her light-blue eyes wandered to and fro, as if she occasionally forgot and again remembered the purpose for which her long and withered hand was searching among the miscellaneous contents of an ample old-fashioned pocket. At length, she pulled out a small chip-box, and, opening it, took out a handsome ring, in which was set a braid of hair, composed of two different colours, black and light-brown, twined together, encircled with brilliants of considerable value.

“Gude man,” she said to Ochiltree, “as ye wad e’er deserve mercy, ye maun gang my errand to the house of Glenallan, and ask for the Earl.”

“The Earl of Glenallan, cummer! ou, he winna see ony o’ the gentles o’ the country, and what likelihood is there that he wad see the like o’ an auld gaberlunzie?”

“Gang your ways and try — and tell him that Elspeth o’ the Craighburnfoot — he’ll mind me best by that name — maun see him or she be relieved frae her lang pilgrimage, and that she sends him that ring in token of the business she wad speak o’.”

Ochiltree looked on the ring with some admiration of its apparent value, and then carefully replacing it in the box, and wrapping it in an old ragged handkerchief, he deposited the token in his bosom.

“Weel, gude-wife,” he said, “I’ll do your bidding, or it’s no be my fault. — But surely there was never sic a braw propine as this sent to a yerl by an auld fishwife, and through the hands o’ a gaberlunzie beggar.”

With this reflection, Edie took up his pike-staff, put on his broad-brimmed bonnet, and set forth upon his pilgrimage. The old woman remained for some time standing in a fixed posture, her eyes directed to the door through which her ambassador had departed. The appearance of excitement, which the conversation had occasioned, gradually left her features — she sunk down upon her accustomed seat and resumed her mechanical labour of the distaff and spindle with her wonted air of apathy.

Edie Ochiltree meanwhile advanced on his

journey — the distance to Glenallan was ten miles, a march which the old soldier accomplished in about four hours. With the curiosity belonging to his idle trade and animated character, he tortured himself the whole way to consider what could be the meaning of this mysterious errand with which he was entrusted, or what connection the proud, wealthy, and powerful Earl of Glenallan could have with the crimes or penitence of an old doating woman, whose rank in life did not greatly exceed that of her messenger. He endeavoured to call to memory all that he had ever known or heard of the Glenallan family, yet, having done so, remained altogether unable to form a conjecture on the subject. He knew that the whole extensive estate of this ancient and powerful family had descended to the Countess lately deceased, who inherited, in a most remarkable degree, the stern, fierce, and unbending character which had distinguished the house of Glenallan since they first figured in Scottish annals. Like the rest of her ancestors, she adhered zealously to the Roman Catholic faith, and was married to an English gentleman of the same communion, and of large fortune, who did not survive their union two years. The Countess was, therefore, left an early widow, with the uncontrouled management of

the large estates of her two sons. The elder, Lord Geraldin, who was to succeed to the title and fortune of Glenallan, was totally dependent on his mother during her life. The second, when he came of age, assumed the name and arms of his father, and took possession of his estate, according to the provisions of the Countess's marriage-settlement. After this period, he chiefly resided in England, and paid very few and brief visits to his mother and brother; and these at length were altogether dispensed with, in consequence of his becoming a convert to the reformed religion.

But even before this mortal offence was given to its mistress, his residence at Glenallan offered few inducements to a gay young man like Edward Geraldin Neville, though its gloom and seclusion seemed to suit the retired and melancholy habits of his elder brother. Lord Geraldin, in the outset of life, had been a young man of accomplishment and hopes. Those who knew him upon his travels entertained the highest expectations of his future career. But such fair dawns are often strangely overcast. The young nobleman returned to Scotland, and after living about a year in his mother's society at Glenallan-house, he seemed to have adopted all the stern gloom and melancholy of her character. Excluded from politics by the incapa-

cities attached to those of his religion, and from all lighter avocations by choice, Lord Geraldin led a life of the strictest retirement. His ordinary society was composed of the clergymen of his communion, who occasionally visited his mansion; and very rarely, upon stated occasions of high festival, one or two families who still professed the Catholic religion were formally entertained at Glenallan-louse. But this was all — their heretic neighbours knew nothing of the family whatever; and even the Catholics saw little more than the sumptuous entertainment and solemn parade which was exhibited on those formal occasions, from which all returned without knowing whether most to wonder at the stern and stately demeanour of the Countess, or the deep and gloomy dejection which never ceased for a moment to cloud the features of her son. The late event had put him in possession of his fortune and title, and the neighbourhood had already begun to conjecture whether gaiety would revive with independence, when those who had some occasional acquaintance with the interior of the family spread abroad a report, that the earl's constitution was undermined by religious austerities, and that, in all probability, he would soon follow his mother to the grave. This event was the more probable

as his brother had died of a lingering complaint, which, in the latter years of his life, had affected at once his frame and his spirits: so that heralds and genealogists were already looking back into their records to discover the heir of this ill-fated family, and lawyers were talking with gleesome anticipation of the probability of a "great Glenallan cause."

As Edie Ochiltree approached the front of Glenallan-house, an ancient building of great extent, the most modern part of which had been designed by the celebrated Inigo Jones, he began to consider in what way he would be most likely to gain access for delivery of his message; and, after much consideration, resolved to send the token to the earl by one of the domestics. With this purpose he stopped at a cottage where he obtained the means of making up the ring in a sealed packet like a petition, addressed, *Forr his hounor the Yerl of Glenllan — These*. But being aware that missives delivered at the doors of great houses by such persons as himself, do not always make their way according to address, Edie determined, like an old soldier, to reconnoitre the ground before he made his final attack. As he approached the porter's-lodge, he discovered, by the number of poor ranked before it, — some of them being indigent persons in the

vicinity, and others itinerants of his own begging profession, — that there was about to be a general dole or distribution of charity.

“A good turn,” said Edie to himself, “never goes unrewarded — I’ll maybe get a gude awmous that I wad hae missed but for trotting on this auld wife’s errand.”

Accordingly, he ranked up with the rest of this ragged regiment, assuming a station as near the front as possible, — a distinction due, as he conceived, to his blue gown and badge, no less than to his years and experience; but he soon found there was another principle of precedence in this assembly to which he had not adverted.

“Are ye a triple man, friend, that ye press forward sae bauldy? — I’m thinking no, for there’s nae Catholics wear that badge.”

“Na, na, I’m no a Roman,” said Edie.

“Then shank yoursel awa’ to the double folk, or single folk, that’s the Episcopals or Presbyterians yonder — it’s a shame to see a heretic hae sic a lang white beard, that would do credit to a hermit.”

Ochiltree, thus rejected from the society of the Catholic mendicants, or those who called themselves such, went to station himself with the paupers of the communion of the church of England, to whom the noble donor allotted

a double portion of his charity. But never was a poor occasional conformist more roughly rejected by a High-church congregation, even when that matter was furiously agitated in the days of good Queen Anne.

"See to him wi' his badge;" they said; "he hears ane o' the king's Presbyterian chaplains sough out a sermon on the morning of every birth-day, and now he would pass himsel for ane o' the Episcopal church! Na, na! we'll take care o' that."

Edie, thus rejected by Rome and prelacy, was fain to shelter himself from the laughter of his brethren among the thin group of Presbyterians, who had either disdained to disguise their religious opinions for the sake of an augmented dole, or perhaps knew they could not attempt the imposition without a certainty of detection.

The same degree of precedence was observed in the mode of distributing the charity, which consisted in bread, beef, and a piece of money, to each individual of all the three classes. The almoner, an ecclesiastic of grave appearance and demeanour, superintended in person the accommodation of the Catholic mendicants, asking a question or two at each as he delivered the charity, and recommending to their prayers the soul of Jocelind, late Countess of

Glenallan, mother of their benefactor. The porter, distinguished by his long staff headed with silver, and by the black gown tufted with lace of the same colour, which he had assumed upon the general mourning in the family, overlooked the distribution of the dole among the prelatists. The less-favoured kirk-folk were committed to the charge of an aged domestic.

As this last discussed some disputed point with the porter, his name, as it chanced to be occasionally mentioned, and then his features, struck Ochiltree, and awakened recollections of former times. The rest of the assembly were now retiring, when the domestic, again approaching the place where Edie still lingered, said, in a strong Aberdeenshire accent, "Fat is the auld feel-body deeing that he canna gang away, now that he's gotten baith meat and siller?"

"Francie Macraw," answered Edie Ochiltree, "d'ye no mind Fontenoy, and 'Keep thegither, front and rear?'"

"Ohon, ohon!" cried Francie, with a true north-country yell of recognition, "naebody could hae said that word but my auld front-rank man, Edie Ochiltree! But I'm sorry to see ye in sic a peer state, man."

"No sae ill aff as ye may think, Francie. But I'm laith to leave this place without a crack wi' you, and I kenna when I may see ye again,

for your folk dinna mak protestants welcome, and that's ae reason that I hae never been here before."

"Fusht, fusht," said Francie, "let that flee stick i' the wa' — when the dirt's dry it will rub out — and come you awa wi' me, and I'll gie ye something better than that beef bane, man."

Having then spoke a confidential word with the porter, (probably to request his connivance,) and having waited until the almoner had returned into the house with slow and solemn step, Francie Macraw introduced his old comrade into the court of Glenallan-house, the gloomy gateway of which was surmounted by a huge scutcheon, in which the herald and undertaker had mingled, as usual, the emblems of human pride and of human nothingness; the Countess's hereditary coat-of-arms, with all its numerous quarterings, disposed in a lozenge, and surrounded by the separate shields of her paternal and maternal ancestry, intermingled with scythes, hour-glasses, skulls, and other symbols of that mortality which levels all distinctions. Conducting his friend as speedily as possible along the large paved court, Macraw led the way through a side-door to a small apartment near the servants' hall, which, in virtue of his personal attendance upon the Earl of Glenallan, he was entitled to call his own.

To produce cold meat of various kinds, strong beer, and even a glass of spirits, was no difficulty to a person of Francie's importance, who had not lost, in his sense of conscious dignity, the keen northern prudence which recommended a good understanding with the butler. Our mendicant envoy drank ale, and talked over old stories with his comrade, until, no other topic of conversation occurring, he resolved to take up the theme of his embassy, which had for some time escaped his memory.

"He had a petition to present to the Earl," he said; — for he judged it prudent to say nothing of the ring, not knowing, as he afterwards observed, how far the manners of a single soldier might have been corrupted by service in a great house.

"Hout, tout, man," said Francie, "the Earl will look at nae petitions — but I can gie't to the almoner."

"But it relates to some secret, that maybe my lord wad like best to see't himsel."

"I'm jeedging that's the very reason that the almoner will be for seeing it the first and foremost."

"But I hae come a' this way on purpose to deliver it, Francie, and ye really maun help me at a pinch."

"Ne'er speed then if I dinna," answered the

Aberdeenshire man; "let them be as cankered as they like, they can but turn me awa, and I was just thinking to ask my discharge, and gang down to end my days at Inverurie."

With this doughty resolution of serving his friend at all ventures, since none was to be encountered which could much inconvenience himself, Francie Macraw left the apartment. It was long before he returned, and when he did, his manner indicated wonder and agitation.

"I am na seere gin ye be Edie Ochiltree o' Carrick's company in the Forty-twa, or gin ye be the de'il in his likeness!"

"And what maks ye speak in that gait, man?" demanded the astonished mendicant.

"Because my lord has been in sic a distress, and sic seerpreese, as I ne'er saw man in my life. But he'll see you — I got that job cookit. He was like a man awa' frae himsel for mony minutes, and I thought he wad hae swarv't a'thegither — and fan he cam' to himsel, he asked fac brought the packet — and fat trow ye I said?"

"An auld soldier," says Edie; "that does likeliest at a gentle's door — at a farmer's it's best to say ye're an auld tinkler, if ye need ony quarters, for maybe the gudewife will hae something to souther."

"But I said ne'er ane o' the twa," answered Francie; "my lord cares as little about the tane

as the tother — for he's best to them that can souther up our sins. Sae I e'en said the bit paper was brought by an auld man wi' a lang fite beard — he might be a capeechin freer for fat I ken'd, for he was dress'd like an auld palmer. Sae ye'll be sent for up fanever he can find mettle to face ye."

"I wish I was weel through this business," thought Edie to himself; "mony folk surmise that the Earl's no very right in the judgment, and wha can say how far he may be offended wi' me for taking upon me sae muckle?"

But there was now no room for retreat — a bell sounded from a distant part of the mansion, and Macraw said with a smothered accent, as if already in his master's presence, "That's my lord's bell! — follow me, and step lightly and cannily, Edie."

Edie followed his guide, who seemed to tread as if afraid of being overheard, through a long passage and up a back stair, which admitted them into the family apartments. They were ample and extensive, furnished at such cost as showed the ancient importance and splendour of the family. But all the ornaments were in the taste of a former and distant period, and one would have almost supposed himself traversing the halls of a Scottish nobleman before the union of the crowns. The late Countess,

partly from a haughty contempt of the times in which she lived, partly from her sense of family pride, had not permitted the furniture to be altered or modernized during her residence at Glenallan-house. The most magnificent part of the decorations was a valuable collection of pictures by the best masters, whose massive frames were somewhat tarnished by time. In this particular also the gloomy taste of the family seemed to predominate. There were some fine family portraits by Vandyke and other masters of eminence; but the collection was richest in the Saints and Martyrdoms of Domenichino, Velasquez, and Murillo, and other subjects of the same kind, which had been selected in preference to landscapes or historical pieces. The manner in which these awful, and sometimes disgusting, subjects were represented, harmonized with the gloomy state of the apartments; a circumstance which was not altogether lost on the old man, as he traversed them under the guidance of his quondam fellow soldier. He was about to express some sentiment of this kind, but Francie imposed silence on him by signs, and, opening a door at the end of the long picture-gallery, ushered him into a small anti-chamber hung with black. Here they found the almoner, with his ear turned to a door opposite that by which they entered, in the atti-

tude of one who listens with attention, but is at the same time afraid of being detected in the act.

The old domestic and the churchman started when they perceived each other. But the almoner first recovered his recollection, and, advancing towards Macraw, said under his breath, but with an authoritative tone, "How dare you approach the Earl's apartment without knocking? and who is this stranger, or what has he to do here? — Retire to the gallery, and wait for me there."

"It's impossible just now to attend your reverence," answered Macraw, raising his voice so as to be heard in the next room, being conscious that the monk would not maintain the altercation within hearing of his patron, — "the Earl's bell has rung."

He had scarce uttered the words, when it was rung again with greater violence than before; and the ecclesiastic, perceiving further expostulation impossible, lifted his finger at Macraw with a menacing attitude, as he left the apartment.

"I tell'd ye sae," said the Aberdeen man in a whisper to Edie, and then proceeded to open the door near which they had observed the chaplain stationed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

— *This ring, —
This little ring, with necromantic force,
Has raised the ghost of Pleasure to my fears,
Conjured the sense of honour and of love
Into such shapes, they fright me from myself.
The Fatal Marriage.*

THE ancient forms of mourning were observed in Glenallan-house, notwithstanding the obduracy with which the members of the family were popularly supposed to refuse to the dead the usual tribute of lamentation. It was remarked, that when she received the fatal letter announcing the death of her second, and, as was once believed, her favourite son, the hand of the Countess did not shake, nor her eyelid twinkle, any more than upon perusal of a letter of ordinary business. Heaven only knows whether the suppression of maternal sorrow, which her pride commanded, might not have some effect

in hastening her own death. It was at least generally supposed, that the apoplectic stroke, which so soon afterwards terminated her existence, was, as it were, the vengeance of outraged Nature for the restraint to which her feelings had been subjected. But although Lady Glenallan forbore the usual external signs of grief, she had caused many of the apartments, amongst others her own and that of the Earl, to be hung with the exterior trappings of woe.

The Earl of Glenallan was therefore seated in an apartment hung with black cloth, which waved in dusky folds along its lofty walls. A screen, also covered with black baize, placed towards the high and narrow window, intercepted much of the broken light which found its way through the stained glass, that represented, with such skill as the fourteenth century possessed, the life and sorrows of the prophet Jeremiah. The table at which the Earl was seated was lighted with two lamps wrought in silver, shedding that unpleasant and doubtful light which arises from the mingling of artificial lustre with that of general day-light. The same table displayed a silver crucifix, and one or two clasped parchment books. A large picture, exquisitely painted by Spagnoletto, represented the martyrdom of St Stephen, and was the only ornament of the apartment.

The inhabitant and lord of this disconsolate chamber was a man not past the prime of life, yet so broken down with disease and mental misery, so gaunt and ghastly, that he appeared but a wreck of manhood; and when he hastily arose and advanced toward his visitor, the exertion seemed almost to overpower his emaciated frame. As they met in the midst of the apartment, the contrast they exhibited was very striking. The hale cheek, firm step, erect stature, and undaunted presence and bearing of the old mendicant, indicated patience and content in the extremity of age, and in the lowest condition to which humanity can sink; while the sunken eye, pallid cheek, and tottering form of the nobleman with whom he was confronted, shewed how little wealth, power, and even the advantages of youth, have to do with that, which gives repose to the mind and firmness to the frame.

The Earl met the old man in the middle of the room, and having commanded his attendant to withdraw into the gallery, and suffer no one to enter the anti-chamber till he rung the bell, awaited, with hurried yet fearful impatience, until he heard first the door of his apartment, and then that of the anti-chamber, shut and fastened by the spring-bolt. When he was satisfied with this security against being overheard,

Lord Glenallan came close up to the mendicant, whom he probably mistook for some person of a religious order in disguise, and said, in a hasty yet faltering tone, «In the name of all our religion holds most holy, tell me, reverend father, what I am to expect from a communication, opened by a token connected with such horrible recollections?»

The old man, appalled by a manner so different from what he had expected from the proud and powerful nobleman, was at a loss how to answer, and in what manner to undeceive him — «Tell me,» continued the Earl, in a tone of increasing trepidation and agony — «tell me, do you come to say, that all that has been done to expiate guilt so horrible, has been too little and too trivial for the offence, and to point out new and more efficacious modes of severe penance? — I will not blench from it, father — let me suffer the pains of my crime here in the body, rather than hereafter in the spirit!»

Edie had now recollection enough to perceive, that if he did not interrupt the frankness of Lord Glenallan's admissions, he was likely to become the confidant of more than might be safe for him to know. — He therefore uttered with a hasty and trembling voice — «Your lordship's honour is mistaken — I am not of your persuasion, nor a clergyman, but, with all

reverence, only puir Edie Ochiltree, the king's beadsman and your honour's."

This explanation he accompanied by a profound bow after his manner, and then drawing himself up erect, rested his arm on his staff, threw back his long white hair, and fixed his eyes upon the Earl, as he waited for an answer.

"And you are not, then," said Lord Glenallan, after a pause of surprise, "you are not then a Catholic priest?"

"God forbid!" said Edie, forgetting in his confusion to whom he was speaking, "I am only the king's beadsman and your honour's, as I said before."

The Earl turned hastily away, and paced the room twice or thrice, as if to recover the effects of his mistake, and then, coming close up to the mendicant, he demanded, in a stern and commanding tone, what he meant by intruding himself on his privacy, and from whence he had got the ring which he had thought proper to send him. Edie, a man of much spirit, was less daunted at this mode of interrogation than he had been confused by the tone of confidence in which the Earl had opened their conversation. To the reiterated question from whom he had obtained the ring, he answered composedly, "from one who was better known to the Earl than to him."

“Better known to me, fellow?” said Lord Glenallan, “what is your meaning? Explain yourself instantly, or you shall experience the consequence of breaking in upon the hours of family distress.”

“It was auld Elspeth Mucklebackit that sent me here,” said the beggar, “in order to say” —

“You doat, old man!” said the Earl, “I never heard the name — but this dreadful token reminds me” —

“I mind now, my lord,” said Ochiltree; “she tauld me your lordship would be mair familiar wi’ her, if I ca’d her Elspeth o’ the Craighburn-foot — She had that name when she lived on your honour’s land, that is, your honour’s worshipful mother’s that was then — Grace be wi’ her!”

“Aye,” said the appalled nobleman, as his countenance sunk, and his cheek assumed a hue yet more cadaverous; “that name is indeed written in the most tragic page of a deplorable history — But what can she desire of me? Is she dead or living?”

“Living, my lord; and entreats to see your lordship before she dies, for she has something to communicate that hangs upon her very soul, and she says she canna flit in peace until she sees you.”

“Not until she sees me! — what can that mean? — but she is doating with age and infirmity — I tell thee, friend, I called at her cottage myself, not a twelvemonth since, from a report that she was in distress, and she did not even know my face or voice.”

“If your honour wad permit me,” said Edie, to whom the length of the conference restored a part of his professional audacity and native talkativeness; “if your honour wad but permit me, I wad say, under correction of your lordship’s better judgment, that auld Elspeth’s like some of the ancient ruined strengths and castles that ane sees amang the hills. There are mony parts of her mind that appear, as I may say, laid waste and decayed, but then there’s parts that look the steever, and the stronger, and the grander, because they are rising just like to fragments amang the ruins o’ the rest — She’s an awful woman.”

“She always was so,” said the Earl, almost unconsciously echoing the observation of the mendicant; “she always was different from other women — likest perhaps to her who is now no more, in her temper and turn of mind. — She wishes to see me, then?”

“Before she dies,” said Edie, “she earnestly entreats that pleasure.”

“It will be a pleasure to neither of us,” said

the Earl sternly, "yet she shall be gratified —
 «She lives, I think, on the seashore to the
 southward of Fairport?"

"Just between Monkbarns and Knockwinnock
 Castle, but nearer to Monkbarns. Your lord-
 ship's honour will ken the laird and Sir Arthur,
 doubtless?"

A stare, as if he did not comprehend the
 question, was Lord Glenallan's answer. Edie
 saw his mind was elsewhere, and did not ven-
 ture to repeat a query which was so little ger-
 main to the matter.

"Are you a Catholic, old man?" demanded
 the Earl.

"No, my lord," said Ochiltree stoutly, for
 the remembrance of the unequal division of the
 dole rose in his mind at the moment; "I thank
 Heaven, I am a good Protestant."

"He who can conscientiously call himself
good, has indeed reason to thank Heaven, be
 his form of Christianity what it will! — But
 who is he that shall dare to do so?"

"Not I," said Edie; "I trust to beware of the
 sin of presumption."

"What was your trade in your youth?" con-
 tinued the Earl.

"A soldier, my lord; and mony a sair day's
 kemping I've seen. I was to have been made
 a serjeant, but" —

“A soldier! then you have slain and burnt, and sacked and spoiled?”

“I winna say,” replied Edie, “that I have been better than my neighbours — it’s a rough trade — war’s sweet to them that never tried it.”

“And you are now old and miserable, asking, from precarious charity, the food which in your youth you tore from the hand of the poor peasant?”

“I am a beggar it is true, my lord; but I am nae just sae miserable neither — for my sins, I hae had grace to repent of them, if I might say sae, and to lay them where they may be better borne than by me — and, for my food, naebody grudges an auld man a bit and a drink — Sae I live as I can, and am contented to die when I am ca’d upon.”

“And thus, then, with little to look back upon that is pleasant or praise-worthy in your past life, with less to look forward to on this side of eternity, you are contented to drag out the rest of your existence — Go, begone; and in your age and poverty and weariness never envy the lord of such a mansion as this, either in his sleeping or waking moments — Here is something for thee.”

The Earl put into the old man’s hand five or six guineas. Edie would, perhaps, have stated his scruples, as upon other occasions, to the

amount of the benefaction, but the tone of Lord Glenallan was too absolute to admit of either answer or dispute. The Earl then called his servant — "See this old man safe from the castle — let no one ask him any questions — and you, friend, begone, and forget the road that leads to my house."

"That would be difficult for me," said Edie, looking at the gold which he still held in his hand, "that would be e'en difficult, since your honour has gi'en me such gude cause to remember it."

Lord Glenallan stared, as hardly comprehending the old man's boldness in daring to bandy words with him, and, with his hand, made him another signal of departure, which the mendicant instantly obeyed.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

*For he was one in all their idle sport,  
And, like a monarch, ruled their little court;  
The pliant bow he formed, the flying ball,  
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all.*

*Crabbe's Village.*

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FRANCIS Macraw, agreeably to the commands of his master, attended the mendicant in order to see him fairly out of the estate, without permitting him to have conversation, or intercourse, with any of the Earl's dependants or domestics. But, judiciously considering that the restriction did not extend to himself, who was the person entrusted with the convoy, he used every measure in his power to extort from Edie the nature of his confidential and secret interview with Lord Glenallan. But Edie had been in his time accustomed to cross-examination, and easily evaded those of his quondam



comrade. "The secrets of grit folk," said Ochiltree within himself, "are just like the wild beasts that are shut up in cages. Keep them hard and fast snecked up, and it's a' very weel or better — but anes let them out, they will turn and rend you. I mind how ill Dugald Gunn cam off for letting loose his tongue about the major's leddy and Captain Bandilier."

Francie was, therefore, foiled in his assaults upon the fidelity of the mendicant, and, like an indifferent chess-player, became, at every unsuccessful movement, more liable to the counter-checks of his opponent.

"Sae ye uphauld ye had nae particulars to say to my lord but about your ain matters?"

"Aye, and about the wee bits o' things I had brought frae abroad. I ken'd you papist folk are unco set on the relics that are fetched frae far-awa' kirks and sae forth."

"Troth, and my lord maun be turned feel outright, an he puts himsel into sic a curfuffle for ony thing ye could bring him, Edie."

"I doubtna ye may say true in the main, neighbour — but maybe he's had some hard play in his younger days, Francie, and that whiles unsettles folk sair."

"Troth, Edie, and ye may say that — and since it's like ye'll ne'er come back to the estate, or, if ye dee, that ye'll no find me there, I'se



e'en tell you he had a heart in his young time sae wrecked and rent, that it's a wonder it hasna broken outright lang afore this day."

"Aye, say ye sae?" said Ochiltree; "that maun hae been about a woman, I rackon?"

"Troth, and ye hae guessed it — jeest a cusin o' his nain — Miss Eveline Neville, as they suld hae ca'd her — there was a sough in the country about it, but it was hushed up as the grandees were concerned — it's mair than twenty years syne — aye, it will be three-and-twenty."

"Aye, I was in America then," said the beggar, "and no in the way to hear the country clashes."

"There was little clash about it, man," replied Macraw; "he liked this young leddy, and suld hae married her, but his mother fand it out, and then the de'il ga'ed o'er Jock Wabster. At last, the peer lass clodded hersel o'er the scaur at the Craighburnfoot into the sea, and there was an end o't."

"An end o't wi' the puir leddy, but, as I rackon, nae end o't wi' the yerl."

"Nae end o't till his life makes an end," answered the Aberdonian.

"But what for did the auld Countess forbid the marriage?" continued the persevering querist.

"Fat for! — She maybe didna weel ken for fat hersel, for she gar'd a' bow to her bidding,



right or wrang — But it was ken'd the young leddy was inclined to some o' the heresies of the country — mair by token, she was sib to him nearer than our Church's rule admits of — Sae the leddy was driven to the desperate act, and the yerl has never since held his head up like a man."

"Weel away!" replied Ochiltree; "it's e'en queer I ne'er heard this tale afore."

"It's e'en queer that ye hear it now, for de'il ane o' the servants durst hae spoken o't had the auld Countess been living — Eh! man, Edie, but she was a trimmer — it wad hae ta'en a skeely man to hae squared wi' her! — But she's in her grave, and we may loose our tongues a bit fan we meet a friend. — But fare ye weel, Edie, I maun be back to the evening service — An ye come to Inverurie maybe sax months awa', dinna forget to ask after Francie Macraw."

What one kindly pressed the other as firmly promised, and the friends having thus parted, with every testimony of mutual regard, the domestic of Lord Glenallan took his road back to the seat of his master, leaving Ochiltree to trace onward his habitual pilgrimage.

It was a fine summer evening, and the world, that is, the little circle which was all in all to the individual by whom it was trodden, lay before Edie Ochiltree, for the chusing of his



night's quarters. When he had passed the less hospitable domains of Glenallan, he had in his option so many places of refuge for the evening, that he was nice and even fastidious in the choice. Ailie Sim's public was on the road-side about a mile before him; but there would be a parcel of young fellows there on the Saturday night, and that was a bar to civil conversation. Other „gudemen and gudewives,” as the farmers and their dames are termed in Scotland, successively presented themselves to his imagination. But one was deaf, and could not hear him; another toothless, and could not make him hear; a third had a cross temper; and a fourth an ill-natured house-dog. At Monkbarns or Knockwinnock he was sure of a favourable and hospitable reception, but they lay too distant to be conveniently reached that night.

„I dinna ken how it is,” said the old man, „but I am nicer about my quarters this night than ever I mind having been in my life. I think having seen a' the brows yonder, and finding out ane may be happier without them, has made me proud o' my ain lot — but I wuss it bode me gude, for pride goeth before destruction. At ony rate, the warst barn e'er man lay in wad be a pleasanter abode than Glenallan-house, wi' a' the pictures and black velvet, and silver bonnie wawlies belonging to it — Sae



I'll e'en settle't at ance, and put in for Ailie Sim's."

As the old man descended the hill above the little hamlet to which he was bending his course, the setting sun had relieved its inmates from their labour, and the young men, availing themselves of the fine evening, were engaged in the sport of long-bowls on a patch of common, while the women and elders looked on. The shout, the laugh, the exclamations of winners and losers, came in blended chorus up the path which Ochiltree was descending, and awakened in his recollection the days when he himself had been a keen competitor, and frequently victor in games of strength and agility. These remembrances seldom fail to excite a sigh, even when the evening of life is cheered by brighter prospects than those of our poor mendicant. "At that time of day," was his natural reflection, "I would have thought as little about ony auld palmering body that was coming down the edge of Kinblythemont, as ony o' thae stalwart young chiels does e'enow about auld Edie Ochiltree."

He was, however, presently cheered, by finding that more importance was attached to his arrival than his modesty had anticipated. A disputed cast had occurred between the bands of players, and as the gauger favoured the one party,



and the schoolmaster the other, the matter might be said to be taken up by the higher powers. The miller and smith, also, had espoused different sides, and, considering the vivacity of two such disputants, there was reason to doubt whether the strife might be amicably terminated. But the first person who caught a sight of the mendicant exclaimed, „Ah! here comes auld Edie, that kens the rule of a' country games better than ony man that ever drave a bowl, or threw an axle-tree, or putted a stane either — let's hae nae quarrelling, callants — we'll stand by auld Edie's judgment.”

Edie was accordingly welcomed, and installed as umpire, with a general shout of gratulation. With all the modesty of a bishop to whom the mitre is proffered, or of a new Speaker called to the chair, the old man declined the high trust and responsibility with which it was proposed to invest him, and in requital for his selfdenial and humility, had the pleasure of receiving the reiterated assurances of young, old, and middle-aged, that he was simply the best qualified person for the office of arbiter „in the haill country-side.” Thus encouraged, he proceeded gravely to the execution of his duty, and, strictly forbidding all aggravating expressions on either side, he heard the smith and gauger on the one side, the miller and school-



master on the other, as junior and senior counsel. Edie's mind, however, was fully made up on the subject before the pleading began; like that of many a judge, who must, nevertheless, go through all the forms, and endure, in its full extent, the eloquence and argumentation of the bar. For when all had been said on both sides, and much of it said over oftener than once, our senior, being well and ripely advised, pronounced the moderate and healing judgment, that the disputed cast was a drawn one, and should therefore count to neither party. This judicious decision restored concord to the field of players; they began anew to arrange their match and their bets, with the clamorous mirth usual on such occasions of village sport, and the more eager were already stripping their jackets, and committing them, with their coloured handkerchiefs, to the care of wives, sisters, and mistresses. But their mirth was singularly interrupted.

On the outside of the group of players began to arise sounds of a description very different from those of sport — that sort of suppressed sigh and exclamation, with which the first news of calamity is received by the hearers, began to be heard indistinctly. A buzz went about among the women of „Eh, sirs! sae young and sae suddenly summoned!” — It then extended



itself among the men, and silenced the sounds of sportive mirth. All understood at once that some disaster had happened in the country, and each enquired the cause at his neighbour, who knew as little as the querist. At length the rumour reached, in a distinct shape, the ears of Edie Ochiltree, who was in the very centre of the assembly. The boat of Mucklebackit, the fisherman whom we have so often mentioned, had been swamped at sea, and four men had perished, it was affirmed, including Mucklebackit and his son. Rumour had in this, however, as in other cases, gone beyond the truth. The boat had indeed been upset, but Stephen, or, as he was called, Steenie Mucklebackit, was the only man who had been drowned. Although the place of his residence and his mode of life removed the young man from the society of the country folks, yet they failed not to pause in their rustic mirth to pay that tribute to sudden calamity, which it seldom fails to receive in cases of infrequent occurrence. To Ochiltree, in particular, the news came like a knell, the rather that he had so lately engaged this young man's assistance in an affair of sportive mischief; and though neither loss nor injury was designed to the German Adept, yet the work was not precisely one in which the latter hours of life ought to be occupied.



Misfortunes never come alone. While Ochil-tree, pensively leaning upon his staff, added his regrets to those of the hamlet which bewailed the young man's sudden death, and internally blamed himself for the transaction in which he had so lately engaged him, the old man's collar was seized by a peace-officer, who displayed his baton in his right hand, and exclaimed, „In the king's name.”

The gauger and schoolmaster united their rhetoric, to prove to the constable and his assistant that he had no right to arrest the king's bedesman as a vagrant; and the mute eloquence of the miller and smith, which was vested in their clenched fists, was prepared to give highland bail for their arbiter; his blue-gown, they said, was his warrant for travelling the country.

„But his blue gown,” answered the officer, „is no protection for assault, robbery, and murder; and my warrant is against him for these crimes.”

„Murder?” said Edie, „wha did I e'er murder?”

„Mr German Doustercivil, the agent at Glen-Withershins mining-works.”

„Murder Dustersnivel! — he's living, and life-like, man.”

„Nae thanks to you if he be; he had a sair struggle for his life, if a' be true he tells,



and ye maun answer for't at the bidding o' the law."

The defenders of the mendicant shrunk back at hearing the atrocity of the charges against him, but more than one kind hand thrust meat and bread and pence upon Edie, to maintain him in the prison, to which the officers were about to conduct him.

"Thanks to ye — God bless ye a', bairns — I've gotten out o' mony a snare when I was waur deserving o' deliverance — I shall escape like a bird from the fowler. Play out your play, and never mind me — I am mair grieved for the puir lad that's gane than for aught they can do to me."

Accordingly the unresisting prisoner was led off, while he mechanically accepted and stored in his wallets the alms which poured in on every hand, and, ere he left the hamlet, was as deep laden as a government victualler. The labour of bearing this accumulating burden was however abridged, by the officer procuring a cart and horse to convey the old man to a magistrate for examination and committal.

The disaster of Steenie, and the arrest of Edie, put a stop to the sports of the village, the pensive inhabitants of which began to speculate upon the vicissitudes of human affairs, which had so suddenly consigned one of their



comrades to the grave, and placed their master of the revels in some danger of being hanged. The character of Dousterswivel being pretty generally known, which was in his case equivalent to being pretty generally detested, there were many speculations upon the probability of the accusation being malicious. But all agreed, that, if Edie Ochiltree behoved in all events to suffer upon this occasion, it was a great pity he had not better merited his fate by killing Dousterswivel outright.



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CHAPTER XXX.

*Who is he? — One that for the lack of land
Shall fight upon the water — he hath chal-
lenged*

*Formerly the grand whale; and by his titles
Of Leviathan, Behemoth, and so forth.*

*He tilted with a sword-fish — Marry, sir,
Th' aquatic had the best — the argument
Still galls our champion's breech.*

Old Play.

“AND the poor young fellow, Steenie Muckle-backit, is to be buried this morning,” said our old friend the Antiquary, as he exchanged his quilted night-gown for an old-fashioned black coat, in lieu of that snuff-coloured vestment which he ordinarily wore, “and, I presume, it is expected that I should attend the funeral?”

“Ou aye,” answered the faithful Caxon, officiously brushing the white threads and specks from his patron’s habit; “the body, God help us, was sae broken against the rocks, that they’re fain to hurry the burial. The sea’s a kittle cast, as I tell my daughter, puir thing, when I want her to get up her spirits — the sea, says I, Jenny, is as uncertain a calling” —

“As the calling of an old periwig-maker, that’s robbed of his business by crops and the powder-tax. Caxon, thy topics of consolation are as ill chosen as they are foreign to the present purpose. *Quid mihi cum fœmina?* What have I to do with thy womankind, who have enough and to spare of mine own? — I pray of you again, am I expected by these poor people to attend the funeral of their son?”

“O, doubtless, your honour is expected,” answered Caxon; “weel I wot ye are expected. Ye ken in this country ilka gentleman is wused to be sae civil as to see the corpse aff his grounds — Ye needna gang higher than the loan-head — it’s no expected your honour suld leave the land — it’s just a Kelso convoy, a step and a half ower the door-stane.”

“A Kelso convoy!” echoed the inquisitive Antiquary; “and why a Kelso convoy more than any other?”

“Dear sir,” answered Caxon, “how should I ken? it’s just a bye-word.”

“Caxon,” answered Oldbuck, “thou art a mere periwig-maker — Had I asked Ochiltree the question, he would have had a legend ready made to my hand.”

“My business,” replied Caxon, with more animation than he commonly displayed, “is with the outside of your honour’s head, as ye are accustomed to say.”

“True, Caxon, true; and it is no reproach to a thatcher that he is not an upholsterer.”

He then took out his memorandum-book and wrote down, “Kelso convoy — said to be a step and a half over the threshold. Authority — Caxon. *Quære* — Whence derived? *Mem.* To write to Dr Graysteel upon the subject.”

Having made this entry, he resumed — “And truly, as to this custom of the landlord attending the body of the peasant, I approve it, Caxon. It comes from ancient times, and was founded deep in the notions of mutual aid and dependence between the lord and cultivator of the soil. And herein I must say, the feudal system (as also in its courtesy towards womankind, in which it exceeded) — herein, I say, the feudal usages mitigated and softened the sternness of classical times. No man, Caxon, ever heard of a Spartan attending the funeral of a

Helot — yet I dare be sworn, that John of the Girnell — ye have heard of him, Caxon?"

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Caxon; "naebody can hae been lang in your honour's company without hearing of that gentleman."

"Well," continued the Antiquary, "I would bet a trifle there was not a *kolb kerl*, or bondsman, or peasant, *ascriptus glebæ*, died upon the monks' territories down here, but John of the Girnell saw them fairly and decently interred."

"Aye, but if it like your honour, they say he had mair to do wi' the births than the burials. Ha! ha! ha!" with a gleeful chuckle."

"Good, Caxon! very good! why, you shine this morning."

"And besides," added Caxon, slily, encouraged by his patron's approbation, "they say too that the Catholic priests in thae times gat something for ganging about to burials."

"Right, Caxon, right as my glove — by the bye, I fancy that phrase comes from the custom of pledging a glove as the signal of irrefragable faith — right, I say, as my glove, Caxon — but we of the Protestant ascendancy have the more merit in doing that duty for nothing which cost money in the reign of that empress of superstition, whom Spenser, Caxon, terms, in his allegorical phrase,

— The daughter of that woman blind,
Abessa, daughter of Corecca slow —

But why talk I of these things to thee? — my poor Lovel has spoiled me, and taught me to speak aloud when it is much the same as speaking to myself — Where's my nephew, Hector M Intyre?"

"He's in the parlour, sir, wi' the leddies."

"Very well," said the Antiquary, "I will betake me thither."

"Now, Monkbarns," said his sister, on his entering the parlour, "ye manna be angry."

"My dear uncle!" began Miss M Intyre.

"What's the meaning of all this?" said Oldbuck, in alarm of some impending bad news, and arguing upon the supplicating tone of the ladies, as a fortress apprehends an attack from the very first flourish of the trumpet which announces the summons; — "What's all this? What do you bespeak my patience for?"

"No particular matter, I should hope, sir," said Hector, who, with his arm in a sling, was seated at the breakfast-table; "however, whatever it may amount to I am answerable for it, as I am for much more trouble that I have occasioned, and for which I have little more than thanks to offer."

"No, no! heartily welcome, heartily wel-

come — only let it be a warning to you," said the Antiquary, "against your fits of anger, which is a short madness — *Ira furor brevis* — but what is this new disaster?"

"My dog, sir, has unfortunately thrown down" —

"If it please Heaven, not the lachrymatory from Clochnaben!" interjected Oldbuck.

"Indeed, uncle," said the young lady, "I am afraid — it was that which stood upon the sideboard — the poor thing only meant to eat the pat of fresh butter."

"In which she has fully succeeded, I presume, for I see that on the table is salted. But that is nothing — my lachrymatory, the main pillar of my theory, on which I rested to shew, in despite of the ignorant obstinacy of Mac-Cribb, that the Romans had passed the defiles of these mountains, and left behind them traces of their arts and arms, is gone — annihilated — reduced to such fragments as might be the shreds of a broken — flowerpot!

— Hector, I love thee,

But never more be officer of mine."

"Why, really, sir, I am afraid I should make a bad figure in a regiment of your raising."

«At least, Hector, I would have you dispatch your camp train, and travel *expeditus*, or *relictis impedimentis*. You cannot conceive how I am annoyed by this beast — She commits burglary I believe, for I heard her charged with breaking into the kitchen after all the doors were locked, and eating up a shoulder of mutton.” — (Our readers, if they chance to remember Jenny Rintherout’s precaution of leaving the door open when she went down to the fisher’s cottage, will probably acquit poor Juno of that aggravation of guilt which the lawyers call a *claustrum fregit*, and which makes the distance between burglary and privately stealing.)

«I am truly sorry, sir,” said Hector, «that Juno has committed so much disorder; but Jack Muirhead, the breaker, was never able to bring her under command. She has more travel than any bitch I ever knew, but” —

«Then, Hector, I wish the bitch would travel herself out of my grounds.”

«We will both of us retreat to-morrow, or to-day; but I would not willingly part from my mother’s brother in unkindness about a paltry pipkin.”

«O brother, brother!” ejaculated Miss M’Intyre, in utter despair at this vituperative epithet.

«Why, what would you have me call it?”

continued Hector; "it was just such a thing as they use in Egypt to cool wine, or sherbet, or water — I brought home a pair of them — I might have brought home twenty."

"What!" said Oldbuck, "shaped such as that your dog threw down?"

"Yes, sir, much such a sort of earthen jar as that which was on the sideboard. They are in my lodgings at Fairport; we brought a parcel of them to cool our wine on the passage — they answer wonderfully well — if I could think they would in any degree repay your loss, or rather that they could afford you pleasure, I am sure I should be much honoured by your accepting them."

"Indeed, my dear boy, I should be highly gratified by possessing them. To trace the connection of nations by their usages, and the similarity of the implements which they employ, has been long my favourite study. Every thing that can illustrate such connections is most valuable to me."

"Well, sir, I shall be much gratified by your acceptance of them, and a few trifles of the same kind. — And now, am I to hope you have forgiven me?"

"O, my dear boy, you are only thoughtless and foolish."

"But Juno — she is only thoughtless too, I

assure you — the breaker tells me she has no vice or stubbornness."

"Well, I grant Juno also a free pardon — conditioned, that you will imitate her in avoiding vice and stubbornness, and that henceforward she banish herself forth of Monkbarns' parlour."

"Then, uncle," said the soldier, "I should have been very sorry and ashamed to propose to you any thing in the way of expiation of my own sins, or those of my follower, that I thought *worth* your acceptance; but now, as all is forgiven, will you permit the orphan-nephew to whom you have been a father, to offer you a trifle, which I have been assured is really curious, and which only the cross accident of my wound has prevented my delivering to you before. I got it from a French Savant, to whom I rendered some service after the Alexandria affair."

The captain put a small ring-case into the Antiquary's hand, which, when opened, was found to contain an antique ring of massive gold, with a cameo, most beautifully executed, bearing a head of Cleopatra. The Antiquary broke forth into unrepressed ecstasy, shook his nephew cordially by the hand, thanked him a hundred times, and shewed the ring to his sister and niece, the latter of whom had the tact to give it sufficient admiration; but Miss Gri-

selda (though she had the same affection for her nephew) had not address enough to follow the lead.

"It's a bonny thing," she said, "Monkbarns, and, I dare say, a valuable — but it's out o' my way — ye ken I am nae judge o' sic matters."

"There spoke all Fairport in one voice!" exclaimed Oldbuck; "it is the very spirit of the borough has infected us all; I think I have smelled the smoke these two days, that the wind has stuck, like a *remora*, in the north east — and its prejudices fly farther than its vapours. Believe me, my dear Hector, were I to walk up the Highstreet of Fairport, displaying this inestimable gem in the eyes of each one I met, no human creature, from the provost to the town-crier, would stop to ask me its history. But if I carried a bale of linen cloth under my arm, I could not penetrate to the Horse-Market ere I would be overwhelmed with queries about its precise texture and price. O, one might parody their brutal ignorance in the words of Gray:

"Weave the warp and weave the woof,

The winding-sheet of wit and sense,

Dull garment of defensive proof

'Gainst all that doth not gather pence."

The most remarkable proof of this peace-offering being quite acceptable, was, that while the Antiquary was in full declamation, Juno, who held him in awe, according to the remarkable instinct by which dogs instantly discover those who like or dislike them, had peeped several times into the room, and, encountering nothing very forbidding in his aspect, had at length presumed to introduce her full person, and finally, becoming bold by impunity, she actually ate up Mr Oldbuck's toast, as, looking first at one, then at another of his audience, he repeated with self-complacence,

“Weave the warp and weave the woof,” —

“You remember the passage in the Fatal Sisters, which, by the way, is not so fine as in the original — But, hey-day! my toast has vanished! — I see which way — Ah, thou type of womankind, no wonder they take offence at thy generic appellation!” — (So saying, he shook his fist at Juno, who scoured out of the parlour.) — “However, as Jupiter, according to Homer, could not rule Juno in Heaven, and as Jack Muirhead, according to Hector M'Intyre, has been equally unsuccessful on earth, I suppose she must have her own way.” And this mild censure the brother and sister justly

accounted a full pardon for Juno's offences, and sate down well pleased to the morning meal.

When breakfast was over, the Antiquary proposed to his nephew to go down with him to attend the funeral. The soldier pleaded the want of a mourning habit.

“O that does not signify — your presence is all that is requisite. I assure you, you will see something that will entertain — no, that's an improper phrase — but that will interest you, from the resemblances which I will point out betwixt popular customs on such occasions, and those of the ancients.”

“Heaven forgive me!” thought M'Intyre; “I shall certainly misbehave, and lose all the credit I have so lately and accidentally gained.”

When they set out, schooled as he was by the warning and entreating looks of his sister, the soldier made his resolution strong to give no offence by evincing inattention or impatience. But our best resolutions are frail, when opposed to our predominant inclinations. Our Antiquary, to leave nothing unexplained, had commenced with the funeral rites of the ancient Scandinavians, when his nephew interrupted him in a discussion upon the “age of hills,” to remark, that a large sea-gull, which flitted around them, had come twice within shot. This

error being acknowledged and pardoned, Oldbuck resumed his disquisition.

«These are circumstances you ought to attend to and be familiar with, my dear Hector; for, in the strange contingencies of the present war which agitates every corner of Europe, there is no knowing where you may be called upon to serve. If in Norway, for example, or Denmark, or any part of the ancient Scania, or Scandinavia, as we term it, what could be more convenient than to have at your fingers' ends the history and antiquities of that ancient country, the *officina gentium*, the mother of modern Europe, the nursery of those heroes,

Stern to resolve, and stubborn to endure,
Who smiled in death! —

How animating, for example, at the conclusion of a weary march, to find yourself in the vicinity of a Runic monument, and discover that you had pitched your tent beside the tomb of a hero!”

«I am afraid, sir, our mess would be better supplied if it chanced to be in the neighbourhood of a good poultry yard.”

«Alas, that you will say so! — No wonder the days of Cressy and Agincourt are no more,

when respect for ancient valour has died away in the breasts of the British soldiery."

"By no means, sir — by no manner of means. I dare say that Edward and Henry, and the rest of these heroes, thought of their dinner, however, before they thought of examining an old tombstone. But I assure you, we are by no means insensible to the memory of our fathers' fame; I used often of an evening to get old Rory M'Alpin to sing us songs out of Ossian about the battles of Fingal and Lamon Mor, and Magnus and the spirit of Muirartach."

"And did you believe," asked the aroused Antiquary, "did you absolutely believe that stuff of Macpherson's to be really ancient, you simple boy?"

"Believe it, sir? — how could I but believe it, when I have heard the songs sung from my infancy?"

"But not the same as Macpherson's English Ossian — you're not absurd enough to say that, I hope?" said the Antiquary, his brow darkening with wrath.

But Hector stoutly abode the storm; like many a sturdy Celt, he imagined the honour of his country and native language connected with the authenticity of these popular poems, and would have fought knee-deep, or forfeited life and land, rather than have given up a line

of them. He therefore undauntedly maintained that Rory M'Alpin could repeat the whole book from one end to another; and it was only upon cross-examination that he explained an assertion so general, by adding, "At least, if he was allowed whiskey enough, he could repeat as long as any body would hearken to him."

"Aye, aye," said the Antiquary; "and that, I suppose, was not very long."

"Why, we had our duty, sir, to attend to, and could not sit listening all night to a piper."

"But do you recollect now," said Oldbuck, setting his teeth firmly together, and speaking without opening them, which was his custom when contradicted — "Do you recollect, now, any of these verses you thought so beautiful and interesting — being a capital judge, no doubt, of such things?"

"I don't pretend to much skill, uncle; but it's not very reasonable to be angry with me for admiring the antiquities of my own country more than those of the Harolds, Harfagers, and Hacos you are so fond of."

"Why, these, sir, — these mighty and unconquered Goths, — were your ancestors! The bare-breeched Celts whom they subdued, and suffered only to exist, like a fearful people, in the crevices of the rocks, were but their Man-cipia and Serfs!"

Hector's brow now grew red in his turn. "Sir, I don't understand the meaning of Man-cipia and Serfs, but I conceive such names are very improperly applied to Scotch Highlanders. No man but my mother's brother dared to have used such language in my presence; and I pray you will observe, that I consider it as neither hospitable, handsome, kind, nor generous usage towards your guest and your kinsman. My ancestors, Mr Oldbuck" —

"Were great and gallant chiefs, I dare say, Hector; and I did not really mean to give you such immense offence in treating a point of remote antiquity, a subject on which I always am myself cool, deliberate, and unimpassioned. But you are hot and hasty, as if you were Hector and Achilles, and Agamemnon to boot."

"I am sorry I expressed myself so hastily, uncle, especially to you, who have been so generous and good — But my ancestors" —

"No more about it, lad; I meant them no affront — none."

"I am glad of it, sir; for the house of M'Intyre" —

"Peace be with them all, every man of them," said the Antiquary. "But to return to our subject — Do you recollect, I say, any of those poems which afforded you such amusement?"

Very hard this, thought M'Intyre, that he will speak with such glee of every thing which is ancient, excepting my family. — Then, after some efforts at recollection, he added aloud, “Yes, sir, I think I do remember some lines; but you do not understand the Gaelic.”

“And will readily excuse hearing it. But you can give me some idea of the sense in our own vernacular idiom?”

“I shall prove a wretched interpreter,” said M'Intyre, running over the original, well garnished with *aghes*, *aughs*, and *oughs*, and similar gutturals, and then coughing and hawking as if the translation stuck in his throat. At length, having premised that the poem was a dialogue between the poet Oisín, or Ossian, and Patrick, the tutelar Saint of Ireland, and that it was difficult, if not impossible, to render the exquisite felicity of the first two or three lines, he said the sense was to this purpose:

“Patrick the psalm-singer,
Since you will not listen to one of my stories,
Though you never heard it before,
I am sorry to tell you
You are little better than an ass” —

“Good! good!” exclaimed the Antiquary, “but go on. Why, this is, after all, the most admirable fooling — I dare say the poet was very right. What says the Saint?”

“He replies in character,” said M’Intyre; “but you should hear M’Alpin sing the original. The speeches of Ossian come in upon a strong deep bass — those of Patrick are upon a tenor key.”

“Like M’Alpin’s drone and small pipes, I suppose,” said Oldbuck. “Pray, go on.”

“Well then, Patrick replies to Ossian:

“Upon my word, son of Fingal,
While I am warbling the psalms,
The clamour of your old women’s tales
Disturbs my devotional exercises.”

“Excellent! — why, this is better and better. I hope Saint Patrick sung better than Blatter-gowl’s precentor, or it would be hang-choice between the poet and the psalmist. But what I admire is the courtesy of these two eminent persons towards each other. It is a pity there should not be a word of this in Macpherson’s translation.”

“If you are sure of that,” said M’Intyre, gravely, “he must have taken very unwarrantable liberties with his original.”

“It will go near to be thought so shortly — but pray proceed.”

“Then,” said M’Intyre, “this is the answer of Ossian:

“Dare you compare your psalms,
You son of a” —

“Son of a what!” exclaimed Oldbuck.

“It means, I think,” said the young soldier, with some reluctance, “son of a female dog:

“Do you compare your psalms
To the tales of the bare-arm’d Fenians?”

“Are you sure you are translating that last epithet correctly, Hector?”

“Quite sure, sir,” answered Hector, doggedly.

“Because I should have thought the nudity might have been quoted as existing in a different part of the body.”

Disdaining to reply to this insinuation, Hector proceeded in his recitation:

“I shall think it no great harm
To wring your bald head from your shoulders” —

“But what is that yonder?” said Hector, interrupting himself.

5

“One of the herd of Proteus,” said the Antiquary — “a *Phoca*, or seal, lying asleep on the beach.”

Upon which M'Intyre, with the eagerness of a young sportsman, totally forgot both Ossian, Patrick, his uncle, and his wound, and exclaiming “I shall have him! I shall have him!” snatched the walking-stick out of the hand of the astonished Antiquary, at some risk of throwing him down, and set off at full speed to get between the animal and the sea, to which element, having caught the alarm, she was rapidly retreating.

Not Sancho when his master interrupted his account of the combatants of Pentapolin with the naked arm, to advance in person to the charge of the flock of sheep, stood more confounded than Oldbuck at this sudden escapade of his nephew.

“Is the devil in him,” was his first exclamation, “to go to disturb the brute that was never thinking of him!” — Then elevating his voice, “Hector — nephew — fool — let alone the *Phoca* — let alone the *Phoca* — they bite, I tell you, like furies. — He minds me no more than a post — there — there they are at it — Gad, the *Phoca* has the best of it. I am glad to see it,” said he, in the bitterness of his heart, though really alarmed for his nephew's

safety; "I am glad to see it, with all my heart and spirit!"

In truth, the seal, finding her retreat intercepted by the light-footed soldier, confronted him manfully, and having sustained a heavy blow without injury, she knitted her brows, as is the fashion of the animal when incensed, and making use at once of her fore-paws and her unwieldly strength, wrenched the weapon out of the assailant's hand, overturned him on the sands, and scuttled away into the sea without doing him any farther injury. Captain M'Intyre, a good deal out of countenance at the issue of his exploit, just rose in time to receive the ironical congratulations of his uncle, upon a single combat, worthy to be commemorated by Ossian himself, "since," said the Antiquary, "your magnanimous opponent hath fled, though not upon eagle's wings, from the foe that was low — Egad, she wallopped away with all the grace of triumph — and has carried my stick off also, by way of *spolia opima*."

M'Intyre had little to answer for himself, except that a Highlander could never pass a deer, a seal, or a salmon, where there was a possibility of having a trial of skill with them, and that he had forgot one of his arms was in a sling. He also made his fall an apology for returning back to Monkbarns, and thus escaped

the farther raillery of his uncle, as well as his lamentations for his walking-stick.

"I cut it," he said, "in the classic woods of Hawthornden, when I did not expect always to have been a bachelor — I would not have given it for an ocean of seals — O, Hector, Hector! — thy namesake was born to be the prop of Troy, and thou to be the plague of Monkbarns!"


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CHAPTER XXXI.

*Tell me not of it, friend — when the young  
weep,*

*Their tears are lukewarm brine; — from our  
old eyes*

*Sorrow falls down like hail-drops of the North,  
Chilling the furrows of our wither'd cheeks.*

*Cold as our hopes, and harden'd as our feel-  
ing —*

*Theirs, as they fall, sink sightless — ours re-  
coil,*

*Heap the fair plain, and bleaken all before us.*

*Old Play.*

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THE Antiquary, being now alone, hastened his pace, which had been retarded by these various discussions, and the rencontre which had closed them, and soon arrived before the half-dozen cottages at Mussel-crag. They now had, in addition to their usual squalid and uncomfortable appearance, the melancholy attributes of



the house of mourning. The boats were all drawn up on the beach; and, though the day was fine, and the season favourable, the chaunt, which is used by the fishers when at sea, was silent, as well as the prattle of the children, and the shrill song of the mother, as she sits mending her nets by the door. A few of the neighbours, some in their antique and well-saved suits of black, others in their ordinary clothes, but all bearing an expression of mournful sympathy with distress so sudden and unexpected, stood gathered around the door of Mucklebackit's cottage, waiting till „the body was lifted.” As the Laird of Monkbarns approached, they made way for him to enter, doffing their hats and bonnets as he passed, with an air of melancholy courtesy, and he returned their salutes in the same manner.

In the inside of the cottage was a scene which our Wilkie alone could have painted, with that exquisite feeling of nature that characterizes his enchanting productions.

The body was laid in its coffin within the wooden bedstead which the young fisher had occupied while alive. At a little distance stood the father, whose rugged weather-beaten countenance, shaded by his grizzled hair, had faced many a stormy night and night-like day. He was apparently revolving his loss in his mind



with that strong feeling of painful grief, peculiar to harsh and rough characters, which almost breaks forth into hatred against the world, and all that remains in it, after the beloved object is withdrawn. The old man had made the most desperate efforts to save his son, and had only been withheld by main force from renewing them at a moment, when, without the possibility of assisting the sufferer, he must himself have perished. All this apparently was boiling in his recollection. His glance was directed sidelong towards the coffin, as to an object on which he could not stedfastly look, and yet from which he could not withdraw his eyes. His answers to the necessary questions which were occasionally put to him, were brief, harsh, and almost fierce. His family had not yet dared to address to him a word, either of sympathy or consolation. His masculine wife, virago as she was, and absolute mistress of the family, as she justly boasted herself on all ordinary occasions, was, by this great loss, terrified into silence and submission, and compelled to hide from her husband's observation the bursts of her female sorrow. As he had rejected food ever since the disaster had happened, not daring herself to approach him, she had that morning, with affectionate artifice, employed the youngest and favourite child to present her husband



with some nourishment. His first action was to push it from him with an angry violence, that frightened the child; his next, to snatch up the boy and devour him with kisses. „Ye'll be a bra' fallow an ye be spared, Patie, — but ye'll never — never can be — what he was to me! — He has sailed the coble wi' me since he was ten years auld, and there wasna the like o' him drew a net betwixt this and Buchan-ness — They say folks maun submit — I shall try.”

And he had been silent from that moment until compelled to answer the necessary questions we have already noticed. Such was the disconsolate state of the father.

In another corner of the cottage, her face covered by her apron, which was flung over it, sat the mother, the nature of her grief sufficiently indicated, by the wringing of her hands, and the convulsive agitation of the bosom which the covering could not conceal. Two of her gossips, officiously whispering into her ear the common-place topic of resignation under irremediable misfortune, seemed as if they were endeavouring to stun the grief which they could not console.

The sorrow of the children was mingled with wonder at the preparations they beheld around them, and at the unusual display of wheaten



bread and wine, which the poorest peasant, or fisher, offers to the guests on these mournful occasions; and thus their grief for their brother's death was almost already lost in admiration of the splendour of his funeral.

But the figure of the old grandmother was the most remarkable of the sorrowing group. Seated on her accustomed chair, with her usual air of apathy, and want of interest in what surrounded her, she seemed every now and then mechanically to resume the motion of twirling her spindle — then to look towards her bosom for the distaff, although both had been laid aside — She would then cast her eyes about as if surprised at missing the usual implements of her industry, and appear caught by the black colour of the gown in which they had dressed her, and embarrassed by the number of persons by whom she was surrounded — then, finally, she would raise her head with a ghastly look, and fix her eyes upon the bed which contained the coffin of her grandson, as if she had at once, and for the first time, acquired sense to comprehend her inexpressible calamity. These alternate feelings of embarrassment, wonder, and grief, seemed to succeed each other more than once upon her torpid features. But she spoke not a word, neither had she shed a tear; nor did one of the family understand, either



from look or expression, to what extent she comprehended the uncommon bustle around her. So she sat among the funeral assembly like a connecting link between the surviving mourners and the dead corpse which they bewailed — a being in whom the light of existence was already obscured by the encroaching shadows of death.

When Oldbuck entered this house of mourning, he was received by a general and silent inclination of the head, and, according to the fashion of Scotland on such occasions, wine and spirits and bread were offered round to the guests. Elspeth, as these refreshments were presented, surprised and startled the whole company by motioning to the person who bore them to stop; then, taking a glass in her hand, she rose up, and, as the smile of dotage played upon her shrivelled features, she pronounced with a hollow and tremulous voice, "Wishing a' your healths, sirs, and often may we hae such merry meetings."

All shrunk from the ominous pledge, and set down the untasted liquor with a degree of shuddering horror, which will not surprise those who know how many superstitions are still common on such occasions among the Scottish vulgar. But, as the old woman tasted the liquor, she suddenly exclaimed with a sort of shriek,



“What’s this? — this is wine — how should there be wine in my son’s house? — Aye,” she continued, with a suppressed groan, “I mind the sorrowful cause now,” and, dropping the glass from her hand, she stood a moment gazing fixedly on the bed in which the coffin of her grandson was deposited, and then sinking gradually into her seat, she covered her eyes and forehead with her withered and pallid hand.

At this moment the clergyman entered the cottage. Mr Blattergowl, though a dreadful proser, particularly on the subject of augmentations, localities, teinds, and overtures in that session of the General Assembly, to which, unfortunately for his auditors, he chanced to act as moderator, was nevertheless a good man, in the old Scottish presbyterian phrase, God-ward and man-ward. No divine was more attentive in visiting the sick and afflicted, in catechizing the youth, in instructing the ignorant, and in reproofing the erring. And hence, notwithstanding impatience of his prolixity and prejudices, personal or professional, and notwithstanding, moreover, a certain habitual contempt for his understanding, especially on affairs of genius and taste, on which Blattergowl was apt to be diffuse, from his hope of one day fighting his way to a chair of rhetoric or belles lettres, — notwithstanding, I say, all the pre-



judices excited against him by these circumstances, our friend the Antiquary looked with great regard and respect on the said Blattergowl, though I own he could seldom, even by his sense of decency and the remonstrances of his womankind, be *hounded out*, as he called it, to hear him preach. But he regularly took shame to himself for his absence when Blattergowl came to Monkbarns to dinner, to which he was always invited of a Sunday, a mode of testifying his respect which the proprietor probably thought fully as agreeable to the clergyman, and rather more congenial to his own habits.

To return from a digression which can only serve to introduce the honest clergyman more particularly to our readers, Mr Blattergowl had no sooner entered the hut, and received the mute and melancholy salutations of the company whom it contained, than he edged himself towards the unfortunate father, and seemed to endeavour to slide in a few words of condolence or of consolation. But the old man was incapable as yet of receiving either; he nodded, however, gruffly, and shook the clergyman's hand in acknowledgement of his good intentions, but was either unable or unwilling to make any verbal reply.

The minister next passed to the mother, mov-



ing along the floor as slowly, silently, and gradually, as if he had been afraid that the ground would, like unsafe ice, break beneath his feet, or that the first echo of a footstep was to dissolve some magic spell, and plunge the hut, with all its inmates, into a subterranean abyss. The tenor of what he said to the poor woman could only be judged by her answers, as, half-stifled by sobs ill-repressed, and by the covering which she still kept over her countenance, she faintly answered at each pause in his speech — “Yes, sir, yes! — Ye’re very gude — ye’re very gude! — Nae doubt, nae doubt! — It’s our duty to submit! — But, O dear, my poor Steenie, the pride o’ my very heart, that was sae handsome and comely, and a help to his family, and a comfort to us a’, and pleasure to a’ thatlookit on him! — O my bairn, my bairn, my bairn! what for is thou lying there, and eh! what for am I left to greet for ye!”

There was no contending with this burst of sorrow and natural affection. Oldbuck had repeated recourse to his snuff-box to conceal the tears which, despite his shrewd and caustic emper, were apt to start on such occasions. The female assistants whimpered, the men held their bonnets to their faces and spoke apart with each other. The clergyman mean time



addressed his ghostly consolation to the aged grandmother. At first she listened, or seemed to listen, to what he said, with the apathy of her usual unconsciousness. But as, in pressing this theme, he approached so near to her ear, that the sense of his words became distinctly intelligible to her, though unheard by those who stood more distant, her countenance at once assumed that stern and expressive cast which characterized her intervals of intelligence. She drew up her head and body, shook her head in a manner that showed at least impatience, if not scorn, of his counsel, and waved her hand slightly, but with a gesture so expressive, as to indicate to all who witnessed it a marked and disdainful rejection of the ghostly consolation proffered to her. The minister stepped back as if repulsed, and, by lifting gently and dropping his hand, seemed to show at once wonder, sorrow, and compassion for her dreadful state of mind. The rest of the company sympathized, and a stifled whisper went through them, indicating how much her desperate and determined manner impressed them with awe and even horror.

In the mean time the funeral company was completed, by the arrival of one or two persons who had been expected from Fairport. The wine and spirits again circulated, and the dumb



show of greeting was anew interchanged. The grandame a second time took a glass in her hand, drank its contents, and exclaimed with a sort of laugh, „Ha! ha! I hae tasted wine twice in ae day — Whan did I that before, think ye, cummers? — Never since” —

And the transient glow vanishing from her countenance, she set the glass down, and sunk upon the settle from which she had risen to snatch at it.

As the general amazement subsided, Mr Old-buck, whose heart bled to witness what he considered as the errings of the enfeebled intellect struggling with the torpid chill of age and sorrow, observed to the clergyman that it was time to proceed to the ceremony. The father was incapable of giving directions, but the nearest relation of the family made a sign to the carpenter, who in such cases goes through the duty of the undertaker, to proceed in his office. The creak of the screw-nails presently announced that the lid of the last mansion of mortality was in the act of being secured above its tenant. The last act which separates us for ever, even from the mortal reliques of the person we assemble to mourn, has usually its effect upon the most indifferent, selfish, and hard-hearted. With a spirit of contradiction which we may be pardoned for esteeming narrow-



mind, the fathers of the Scottish kirk rejected, even on this most solemn occasion, the form of an address to the Divinity, lest they should be thought to give countenance to the rituals of Rome or of England. With much better and more liberal judgment, it is the present practice of most of the Scottish clergymen to seize this opportunity of offering a prayer and exhortation, suitable to make an impression upon the living, while they are yet in the very presence of the reliques of him, whom they have but lately seen such as they themselves, and who now is such as they must in their time become. But this decent and praiseworthy practice was not adopted at the time of which I am treating, or, at least, Mr Blattergowl did not act upon it, and the ceremony proceeded without any devotional exercise.

The coffin, covered with a pall, and supported upon handspikes by the nearest relatives, now only waited the father to support the head, as is customary. Two or three of these privileged persons spoke to him, but he only answered by shaking his hand and his head in token of refusal. With better intention than judgment, the friends, who considered this as an act of duty on the part of the living, and of decency towards the deceased, would have proceeded to enforce their request, had not



Oldbuck interfered between the distressed father and his well-meaning tormentors, and informed them, that he himself, as landlord and master to the deceased, «would carry his head to the grave.” In spite of the sorrowful occasion, the hearts of the relatives swelled within them at so marked a distinction on the part of the Laird; and old Ailison Breck, who was present among other fish-women, swore almost aloud, «His honour Monkbarns should never want sax warp of oysters in the season, (of which fish he was understood to be fond,) if she should gang to sea and dredge for them hersel, in the foulest wind that ever blew.” And such is the temper of the Scottish common people, that, by this instance of compliance with their customs, and respect for their persons, Mr Oldbuck gained more popularity than by all the sums which he had yearly distributed in the parish for purposes of private or general charity.

The sad procession now moved slowly forward, preceded by the beadles, or saulies, with their batons. — miserable-looking old men, tottering as if on the edge of that grave to which they were marshalling another, and clad, according to Scottish guise, with threadbare black coats, and huntingcaps decorated with rusty crape. Monkbarns would probably have remonstrated against this superfluous expence, had he



been consulted; but, in doing so, he would have given more offence than he gained popularity by condescending to perform the office of chief mourner. Of this he was quite aware, and wisely withheld rebuke, where rebuke and advice would have been equally unavailing. In truth, the Scottish peasantry are still infected with that rage for funeral ceremonial, which once distinguished the grandees of the kingdom so much, that a sumptuary law was made by the parliament of Scotland for the purpose of restraining it; and I have known many in the lowest stations, who have denied themselves not merely the comforts, but almost the necessities of life, in order to save such a sum of money as might enable their surviving friends to bury them like Christians, as they termed it, nor could their faithful executors be prevailed upon, though equally necessitous, to turn to the use and maintenance of the living, the money vainly wasted upon the interment of the dead.

The procession to the church-yard, at about half a mile's distance, was made with the mournful solemnity usual on these occasions, — the body was consigned to its parent earth, — and when the labour of the grave-diggers had filled up the trench, and covered it with fresh sod, Mr Oldbuck, taking his hat off, saluted the assistants, who had stood by in mournful



silence, and with that adieu dispersed the mourners.

The clergyman offered our Antiquary his company to walk homeward; but Mr Oldbuck had been so much struck with the deportment of the fisherman and his mother, that, moved by compassion, and perhaps also, in some degree, by that curiosity which induces us to seek out even what gives us pain to witness, he preferred a solitary walk by the coast, for the purpose of again visiting the cottage as he passed.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

*What is this secret sin, — this untold tale,  
That art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse?  
— Her muscles hold their place;  
Nor discomposed, nor formed to steadiness,  
No sudden flushing, and no faltering lip —  
Mysterious Mother.*

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THE coffin had been borne from the place where it rested. The mourners, in regular gradation, according to their rank, or their relationship to the deceased, had filed from the cottage, while the younger male children were led along to totter after the bier of their brother, and to view with wonder a ceremonial which they could hardly comprehend. The female gossips next rose to depart, and, with consideration for the situation of the parents, carried along with them the girls of the family,



to give the unhappy pair time and opportunity to open their hearts to each other, and soften their grief by communicating it. But their kind intention was without effect. The last of them had darkened the entrance of the cottage, as she went out, and drawn the door softly behind her, when the father, first ascertaining by a hasty glance that no stranger remained, started up, clasped his hands wildly above his head, uttered a cry of the despair which he had hitherto repressed, and, in all the impotent impatience of grief, half rushed half staggered forward to the bed on which the coffin had been deposited, threw himself down upon it, and smothering; as it were, his head among the bedclothes, gave vent to the full passion of his sorrow. It was in vain that the wretched mother, terrified by the vehemence of her husband's affliction — affliction still more fearful as agitating a man of hardened manners and a robust frame — suppressed her own sobs and tears, and, pulling him by the skirts of his coat, implored him to rise and remember, that, though one was removed, he had still a wife and children to comfort and support. The appeal came at too early a period of his anguish, and was totally unattended to; he continued to remain prostrate, indicating, by sobs so bitter and violent that they shook the bed



and partition against which it rested, by clenched hands which grasped the bed-clothes, and by the vehement and convulsive motion of his legs, how deep and how terrible was the agony of a father's sorrow.

“O, what a day is this! what a day is this!” said the poor mother, her womanish affliction already exhausted by sobs and tears, and now almost lost in terror for the state in which she beheld her husband; “O, what an hour is this! and naebody to help a poor lone woman — O, gudemither, could ye but speak a word to him! — wad ye but bid him be comforted!”

To her astonishment, and even to the increase of her fear, her husband's mother heard and answered the appeal. She rose and walked across the floor without support, and without much apparent feebleness, and, standing by the bed on which her son had extended himself, she said, “Rise up, my son, and sorrow not for him that is beyond sin and sorrow and temptation — Sorrow is for those that remain in this vale of sorrow and darkness — I, wha dinna sorrow, and wha canna sorrow, for ony ane, hae maist need that ye should a' sorrow for me.”

The voice of his mother, not heard for years as taking part in the active duties of life, or offering advice or consolation, produced its effect



upon her son. He assumed a sitting posture on the side of the bed, and his appearance, attitude, and gestures, changed from those of angry despair to deep grief and dejection. The grandmother retired to her nook, the mother mechanically took in her hand her tattered Bible, and seemed to read, though her eyes were drowned with tears.

They were thus occupied when a loud knock was heard at the door.

“Hegh sirs!” said the poor mother, “wha is it that can be coming in that gate e’enow? — They canna hae heard o’ our misfortune, I’m sure.”

The knock being repeated, she rose and opened the door, saying querulously, “VWhatna gait’s that to disturb a sorrowfu’ house?”

A tall man in black stood before her, whom she instantly recognised to be Lord Glenallan.

“Is there not,” he said, “an old woman lodging in this or one of the neighbouring cottages, called Elspeth, who was long resident at Craighburnfoot of Glenallan?”

“It’s my gudemither, my Lord,” said Margaret; “but she canna see ony body e’enow — Ohon! we’re dreeing a sair weird — we hae had a heavy dispensation.”

“God forbid,” said Lord Glenallan, “that I should on light occasions disturb your sorrow



— but my days are numbered — your mother-in-law is in the extremity of age, and, if I see her not to-day, we may never meet on this side of time.”

“And what wad ye see at an auld woman, broken down wi’ age and sorrow and heart-break? — Gentle or semple shall not darken my doors the day my bairn’s been carried out a corpse.”

While she spoke thus, indulging the natural irritability of disposition and profession, which began to mingle itself in some degree with her grief when its first uncontrouled bursts were gone by, she held the door about one-third part open, and placed herself in the gap, as if to render the visitor’s entrance impossible. But the voice of her husband was heard from within — “Wha’s that, Maggie? what for are ye steeking them out? — let them come in — it doesna signify an auld rope’s end wha comes in or wha gaes out o’ this house frae this time forward.”

The woman stood aside at her husband’s command, and permitted Lord Glenallan to enter the hut. The dejection exhibited in his broken frame and emaciated countenance, formed a strong contrast with the effects of grief, as they were displayed in the rude and weatherbeaten visage of the fisherman, and the masculine fea-



tures of his wife. He approached the old woman as she was seated on her usual settle, and asked her, in a tone as audible as his voice could make it, "Are you Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot of Glenallan?"

"Wha is it that asks about the unhallowed residence of that evil woman? was the answer returned to his query.

"The unhappy Earl of Glenallan."

"Earl — Earl of Glenallan!"

"He who was called William, Lord Geraldin," said the Earl; "and whom his mother's death has made Earl of Glenallan."

"Open the bole," said the old woman firmly and hastily to her daughter-in-law, "open the bole wi' speed, that I may see if this be the right Lord Geraldin — the son of my mistress — him that I received in my arms within the hour after he was born — him that has reason to curse me that I didna smother him before the hour was past!"

The window, which had been shut, in order that a gloomy twilight might add to the solemnity of the funeral meeting, was opened as she commanded, and threw a sudden and strong light through the smoky and misty atmosphere of the stifling cabin. Falling in a stream upon the chimney, the rays illuminated, in the way that Rembrandt would have chosen, the features



of the unfortunate nobleman, and those of the old sybil, who now, standing upon her feet, and holding him by one hand, peered anxiously in his features with her light-blue eyes, and holding her long and withered fore-finger within a small distance of his face, moved it slowly as if to trace the outlines, and reconcile what she recollected with what she now beheld. As she finished her scrutiny, she said, with a deep sigh, „It's a sair — sair change — and wha's fault is it? — but that's written down where it will be remembered — it's written on tablets of brass with a pen of steel, where all is recorded that is done in the flesh. — And what,” she said, after a pause, „what is Lord Geraldin seeking from a puir auld creature like me that's dead already, and only belongs sae far to the living that she is na yet laid in the moulds?”

„Nay,” answered Lord Glenallan, „in the name of Heaven, why was it that you requested so urgently to see me? and why did you back your request by sending a token, which you knew well I dared not refuse?”

As he spoke thus, he took from his purse the ring which Edie Ochiltree had delivered to him at Glenallan-house. The sight of this token produced a strange and instantaneous effect upon the old woman. The palsy of fear



was immediately added to that of age, and she began instantly to search her pockets with the tremulous and hasty agitation of one who becomes first apprehensive of having lost something of great importance — then, as if convinced of the reality of her fears, she turned to the Earl and demanded, „And how cam ye by it, then? — how cam ye by it? — I thought I had kept it sae securely — what will the Countess say?”

„You know,” said the Earl, „at least you must have heard, that my mother is dead.”

„Dead! are ye no imposing upon me? has she left a’ at last, lands and lordship and lineages?”

„All, all,” said the Earl, „as mortals must leave all human vanities.”

„I mind now,” answered Elspeth, „I heard of it before; but there has been sic distress in our house since, and my memory is sae muckle impaired — But ye are sure your mother, the Lady Countess, is gane hame?”

The Earl again assured her that her former mistress was no more.

„Then,” said Elspeth, „it shall burden my mind nae langer! — When she lived, wha dared to speak what it would hae displeased her to hae had noised abroad? — But she’s gane — and I will confess all.”



Then, turning to her son and daughter-in-law, she commanded them imperatively to quit the house, and leave Lord Geraldin (for so she still called him) alone with her. But Maggie Mucklebackit, her first burst of grief being over, was by no means disposed in her own house to pay passive obedience to the commands of her mother-in-law, an authority which is peculiarly obnoxious to persons in her rank of life, and which she was the more astonished at hearing revived, when it seemed to have been so long relinquished and forgotten.

„It was an unco' thing,” she said, in a grumbling tone of voice, — for the rank of Lord Glenallan was somewhat imposing — „It was an unco' thing to bid a mother leave her ain house wi' the tear in her e'e, the moment her eldest son had been carried a corpse out at the door o't.”

The fisherman, in a stubborn and sullen tone, added to the same purpose, „This is nae day for your auld-wairld stories, mother — My Lord, if he be a Lord, may ca' some other day — or he may speak out what he has gotten to say if he likes it — There's nane here will think it worth their while to listen to him or you either. But neither for laird or loon, gentle or semple, will I leave my ain house to pleasure ony body, on the very day my poor” —



Here his voice choked, and he could proceed no further; but as he had risen when Lord Glenallan came in, and had since remained standing, he now threw himself doggedly upon a seat, and remained in the sullen posture of one who was determined to keep his word.

But the old woman, whom this crisis seemed to repossess in all those powers of mental superiority with which she had once been eminently gifted, arose, and, advancing towards him, said with a solemn voice, „My son, as ye wad shun hearing of your mother's shame, — as ye wad not willingly be a witness of her guilt, — as ye wad deserve her blessing and avoid her curse, I charge ye, by the body that bore and that nursed ye, to leave me at freedom to speak with Lord Geraldin, what nae mortal ears but his ain maun listen to. Obey my words, that when ye lay the moulds on my head, (and O, that the day were come!) ye may remember this hour without the reproach of having disobeyed the last earthly command that ever your mother wared on you.”

The terms of this solemn charge revived in the fisherman's heart the habit of instinctive obedience, in which his mother had trained him up, and to which he had submitted implicitly while her powers of exacting it remained entire. The recollection mingled also with the



prevailing passion of the moment, for, glancing his eye at the bed on which the dead body had been laid, he muttered to himself, „*He never disobeyed me, in reason or out o' reason, and what for should I vex her?*” Then, taking his reluctant spouse by the arm, he led her gently out of the cottage, and latched the door behind them as he left it.

As the unhappy parents withdrew, Lord Glenallan, to prevent the old woman from relapsing into her lethargy, again pressed her on the subject of the communication which she proposed so make to him.

“Ye will have it sune eneugh,” she replied; “my mind’s clear eneugh now, and there is not — I think there is not — a chance of my forgetting what I have to say. My dwelling at Craighburnfoot is before my een, as it were present in reality — the green bank, just where the burn met wi’ the sea — the twa little barks, wi’ their sails furled, lying in the natural cove which it formed — the high cliff that joined it with the pleasure-grounds of the house of Glenallan, and hung right ower the stream — Ah! yes, I may forget that I had a husband and hae lost him — that I hae but ane alive of our four fair sons — that misfortune upon misfortune has devoured our ill-gotten wealth — that they carried the corpse of my son’s



eldest-born frae the house this morning — But I never can forget the days I spent at bonny Craighburnfoot!”

“You were a favourite of my mother,” said Lord Glenallan, desirous to bring her back to the point, from which she was wandering.

“I was, I was, — ye needna mind me o’ that. She brought me up abune my station, and wi’ knowledge mair than my fellows — but, like the tempter of auld, wi’ the knowledge of gude she taught me the knowledge of evil.”

“For God’s sake, Elspeth,” said the astonished Earl, “proceed, if you can, to explain the dreadful hints you have thrown out! — I well know you are confidant to one dreadful secret, which should split this roof even to hear it named — but speak on farther.”

“I will,” she said, — “I will — just bear wi’ me for a little;” — and again she seemed lost in recollection, but it was no longer tinged with imbecillity or apathy. She was now entering upon the topic which had long loaded her mind, and which doubtless often occupied her whole soul at times when she seemed dead to all around her. And I may add, as a remarkable fact, that such was the intense operation of mental energy upon her physical powers and nervous system, that, notwithstanding her infirmity of deafness, each word that



Lord Glenallan spoke during this remarkable conference, although in the lowest tone of horror or agony, fell as full and distinct upon Elspeth's ear as it could have done at any period of her life. She spoke also herself clearly, distinctly, and slowly, as if anxious that the intelligence she communicated should be fully understood; concisely at the same time, and with none of the verbiage or circumlocutory additions natural to those of her sex and condition. In short, her language bespoke a better education, as well as an uncommonly firm and resolved mind, and a character of that sort from which great virtues or great crimes may be naturally expected. The tenor of her communication is disclosed in the next chapter.







it by the maist sincere attachment, but I fell into disgrace frae a trifling act of disobedience, reported to your mother by ane that thought, and she wasna wrang, that I was a spy upon her actions and yours."

"I charge thee, woman," said the Earl, in a voice trembling with passion, "name not her name in my hearing."

"I MUST," returned the penitent firmly and calmly, "or how can you understand me?"

The Earl leaned upon one of the wooden chairs of the hut, drew his hat over his face, clenched his hands together, set his teeth like one whn summons up courage to undergo a painful operation, and made a signal to her to proceed.

"I say, then," she resumed, "that my disgrace with my mistress was chiefly owing to Miss Eveline Neville, then bred up in Glenallan-house as the daughter of a cousin-german and intimate friend of your father that was gane. There was muckle mystery in her history, but wha dared to enquire farther than the Countess liked to tell? — All in Glenallan-house loved Miss Neville — all but twa — your mother and mysel — we baith hated her."

"God! for what reason, since a creature so mild, so gentle, so formed to inspire affection, never walked on this wretched world?"



“It may hae been sae,” rejoined Elspeth, “but your mother hated a’ that cam of your father’s family — a’ but himsel. Her reasons related to strife which fell between them soon after her marriage; the particulars are naething to this purpose. But, O, doubly did she hate Eveline Neville when she perceived that there was a growing kindness atween you and that unfortunate young leddy! Ye may mind that the Countess’s dislike did na gang farther at first than just shewing o’ the cauld shouther — at least it wasna seen farther; but at the lang run it brak out into such downright violence that Miss Neville was even fain to seek refuge at Knockwinnock castle with Sir Arthur’s leddy, wha (God sain her) was then wi’ the living.”

“You rend my heart by recalling these particulars — but go on, and may my present agony be accepted as additional penance for the involuntary crime!”

“She had been absent some months,” continued Elspeth, “when I was ae night watching in my hut the return of my husband from fishing, and shedding in private those bitter tears that my proud spirit wrung frae me whenever I thought on my disgrace. The sneck was drawn, and the Countess, your mother, entered my dwelling. I thought I had seen a spectre, for, even in the height of my favour, this was an



honour she had never done me, and she looked as pale and ghastly as if she had risen frae the grave. She sate down and wrung the draps from her hair and cloak, for the night was drizzling, and her walk had been through the plantations, that were a' loaded with dew. I only mention these things that you may understand how weel that night lives in my memory, and weel it may. I was surprised to see her, but I durstna speak first mair than if I had seen a phantom — Na, I durst not, my lord, I that hae seen mony sights o' terror, and never shook at them — Sae, after a silence, she said, 'Elspeth Cheyne, (for she always gave me my maiden name,) are not ye the daughter of that Reginald Cheyne, who died to save his master, Lord Glenallan, on the field of Sheriffmuir?' and I answered her as proudly as hersel nearly — 'As sure as you are the daughter of that Earl of Glenallan whom my father saved that day by his own death.'"

Here she made a deep pause.

"And what followed? — what followed? — For heaven's sake, good woman — But why should I use that word? — Yet, good or bad, I command you to tell me."

"And little I should value earthly command," answered Elspeth, "were there not a voice that has spoken to me, sleeping and waking, that



drives me forward to tell this sad tale. — Aweel, my Lord — the Countess said to me, ‘My son loves Eveline Neville — they are agreed — they are plighted; — should they have a son, my right over Glenallan merges — I sink from that moment from a Countess into a miserable stipendiary dowager — I, who brought lands and vassals, and high blood and ancient fame, to my husband, I must cease to be mistress when my son has an heirmale. But I care not for that — had he married ony but ane of the hated Nevilles I had been patient — But for them — that they and their descendants should enjoy the rights and honours of my ancestors, goes through my heart like a two-edged dirk. And this girl — I detest her!’ — And I answered, for my heart kindled at her words, that her hate was equalled by mine.”

“Wretch!” exclaimed the Earl, in spite of his determination to preserve silence, — “Wretched woman! what cause of hate could have arisen from a being so innocent and gentle?”

“I hated what my mistress hated, as was the use with the liege vassals of the house of Glenallan; for though, my Lord, I married under my degree, yet an ancestor of yours never went to the field of battle, but an ancestor of the frail, demented, auld, useless wretch wha now speaks with you, carried his shield before him.



— But that was not a'," continued the beldame, her earthly and evil passions rekindling as she became heated in her narration; "that was not a' — I hated Miss Eveline Neville for her ain sake — I brought her frae England, and, during our whole journey, she gecked and scorned at my northern speech and habit, as her southland leddies and kimmers had done at the boarding-school as they ca'd it" (and, strange as it may seem, she spoke of an affront offered by a heedless school-girl without intention, with a degree of inveteracy, which, at such a distance of time, a mortal offence would neither have authorised or excited in any well-constituted mind) — "Yes, she scorned and jested at me — but let them that scorn the tartan fear the dirk!"

She paused, and then went on. "But I deny not that I hated her mair than she deserved. My mistress, the Countess, persevered and said, 'Elspeth Cheyne, this unruly boy will marry with the false English blood — were days as they have been, I could throw her into the Massymore of Glenallan, and fetter him in the Keep of Strathbonnel — But these times are past, and the authority which the nobles of the land should exercise, is delegated to quibbling lawyers and their baser dependants. Hear me, Elspeth Cheyne! if you are your father's daughter as I am mine, I will find means that they shall



not marry — She walks often to that cliff that overhangs your dwelling to look for her lover's boat, (ye may remember the pleasure ye then took on the sea, my Lord) — let him find her forty fathom lower than he expects!' — Yes! — ye may stare and frown and clench your hand, but, as sure as I am to face the only Being I ever feared, — and O that I had feared him mair! — these were your mother's words — what avails it to me to lie to you? — But I wadna consent to stain my hand with blood. — Then she said, 'By the religion of our holy Church, they are ower *sibb* thegither; but I expect nothing but that both will become heretics as well as disobedient reprobates,' that was her addition to that argument — And then, as the fiend is ever ower busy wi' brains like mine, that are subtle beyond their use and station, I was unhappily permitted to add — 'But they might be brought to think themselves sae *sibb* as no Christian law will permit their wedlock.'"

Here the Earl of Glenallan echoed her words with a shriek so piercing, as almost to rend the roof of the cottage — "Ah! then Eveline Neville was not the — the" —

"The daughter, ye would say, of your father?" continued Elspeth; "No — be it a torment or be it a comfort to you — ken the truth, she was nae mair a daughter of your father's house than I am."



“Woman, deceive me not — make me not curse the memory of the parent I have so lately laid in the grave, for sharing in a plot the most cruel, the most infernal” —

“Bethink ye, my Lord Geraldin, ere ye curse the memory of a parent that’s gane, is there none of the blood of Glenallan living, whase faults have led to this dreadfu’ catastrophe?”

“Mean you my brother? — he, too, is gone,” said the Earl.

“No,” replied the sybil, “I mean yoursel, Lord Geraldin. Had you not transgressed the obedience of a son by wedding Eveline Neville in secret while a guest at Knockwinnock, our plot might have separated you for a time, but would have left at least your sorrows without remorse to canker them — But your ain conduct had put poison in the weapon that we threw, and it pierced you with the mair force, because ye cam rushing to meet it. Had your marriage been a proclaimed and acknowledged action, our stratagem to throw an obstacle into your way that couldna be got ower, neither wad nor could hae been practised against ye.”

“Great Heaven!” said the unfortunate nobleman; “it is as if a film fell from my obscured eyes! — Yes, I now well understand the doubtful hints of consolation thrown out by my wretched mother, tending indirectly to impeach



the evidence of the horrors of which her arts had led me to believe myself guilty."

"She could not speak mair plainly," answered Elspeth, "without confessing her ain fraud, and she would have submitted to be torn by wild horses, rather than unfold what she had done; and, if she had still lived, so would I for her sake. They were stout hearts the race of Glenallan, male and female, and sae were a' that in auld times cried their gatheringword of *Clachnaben* — they stood shouther to shouther — Nae man parted frae his chief for love of gold or of gain, or of right or of wrang. — The times are changed, I hear, now."

The unfortunate nobleman was too much wrapped up in his own confused and distracting reflections to notice the rude expressions of savage fidelity, in which, even in the latest ebb of life, the unhappy author of his misfortunes seemed to find a stern and stubborn source of consolation.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed, "I am then free from a guilt the most horrible with which man can be stained, and the sense of which, however involuntary, has wrecked my peace, destroyed my health, and bowed me down to an untimely grave. Accept," he fervently uttered, lifting his eyes upwards, "accept my humble thanks! — If I live miserable, at least



I shall not die stained with that unnatural guilt! — And thou — proceed if thou hast more to tell — proceed while thou hast voice to speak it, and I have powers to listen.”

“Yes,” answered the beldame, “the hour when you shall hear, and I shall speak, is indeed passing rapidly away — Death has crossed your brow with his finger, and I find his grasp turning every day caulder at my heart. — Interrupt me nae mair with exclamations and groans and accusations, but hear my tale to an end! And then — if ye be indeed sic a Lord of Glenallan as I hae heard of in *my* day — make your merry men gather the thorn, and the briar, and the green hollin, till they heap them as high as the house-riggin’, and burn! burn! burn! the auld witch Elspeth, and a’ that can put ye in mind that sic a creature ever crawled upon the land!”

“Go on,” said the Earl, “go on — I will not again interrupt you.”

He spoke in a half-suffocated yet determined voice, resolved that no irritability on his part should deprive him of this opportunity of acquiring proofs of the wonderful tale he then heard. But Elspeth had become exhausted by a continuous narration of such unusual length; the subsequent part of her story was more broken, and, though still distinctly intelligible



in most parts, had no longer the lucid conciseness which the first part of her narrative had displayed to such an astonishing degree. Lord Glenallan found it necessary, when she had made some attempts to continue her narrative without success, to prompt her memory, by demanding, what proofs she could propose to bring of the truth of a narrative so different from that which she had originally told?

“The evidence,” she replied, “of Eveline Neville’s real birth was in the Countess’s possession, with reasons for its being, for some time, kept private. They may yet be found, if she has not destroyed them, in the left-hand drawer of the ebony cabinet that stood in the dressing-room — these she meant to suppress for the time until you went abroad again, when she trusted, before your return, to send Miss Neville back to her ain country, or to get her settled in marriage.”

“But did you not shew me letters of my father’s which seemed to me, unless my senses altogether failed me in that horrible moment, to avow his relationship to — to the unhappy” —

“We did; and, with my testimony, how could you doubt the fact, or her either? — But we suppressed the true explanation of these letters, and that was, that your father thought it right the young leddy should pass for his



daughter for a while, on account o' some family reasons that were amang them."

"But wherefore, when you learned our union, was this dreadful artifice persisted in?"

"It wasna," she replied, "till Lady Glenallan had communicated this fause tale that she suspected ye had actually made a marriage — nor even then did you avow it sae as to satisfy her, whether the ceremony had in verity passed atween ye or no — But ye remember, O ye canna but remember weel, what passed in that awfu' meeting!"

"Woman! you swore upon the gospels to the fact which you now disavow."

"I did, and I wad hae ta'en a yet mair holy pledge on it, if there had been ane — I wad not hae spared the blood of my body, or the guilt of my soul, to serve the house of Glenallan."

"Wretch! do you call that horrid perjury, attended with consequences yet more dreadful — do you esteem that a service to the house of your benefactors?"

"I served her, wha was then the head of Glenallan, as she required me to serve her. The cause was between God and her conscience — the manner between God and mine — She is gane to her account, and I maun follow — Have I tauld you a'?"



“No,” answered Lord Glenallan; “you have yet more to tell — you have to tell me of the death of the angel whom your perjury drove to despair, stained, as she thought herself, with a crime so horrible — Speak truth — was that dreadful — was that horrible incident” — he could scarcely articulate the words — “was it as reported? or was it an act of yet further, though not more atrocious cruelty, inflicted by others?”

“I understand you,” said Elspeth; “but report spoke truth — our false witness was indeed the cause, but the deed was her ain distracted act — On that fearfu’ disclosure, when ye rushed frae the Countess’s presence, and saddled your horse, and left the castle like a fire-flaught, the Countess hadna yet discovered your private marriage; she hadna fund out that the union, which she had framed this awfu’ tale to prevent, had e’en ta’en place. Ye fled from the house as if the fire o’ Heaven was about to fa’ upon it, and Miss Neville, atween reason and the want o’t, was put under sure ward. But the ward sleep’t, and the prisoner waked — the window was open — the way was before her — there was the cliff, and there was the sea! — O, when will I forget that!”

“And thus died,” said the Earl, “even so as was reported?”



“No, my Lord. I had gane out to the cove — the tide was in, and it flowed, as ye’ll remember, to the foot of that cliff — it was a great convenience that for my husband’s trade — Where am I wandering? — I saw a white object dart frae the tap o’ the cliff like a sea-maw through the mist, and then a heavy flash and sparkle of the waters shewed me it was a human creature that had fa’en into the waves. I was bold and strong, and familiar with the tide. I rushed in and grasped her gown, and drew her out and carried her on my shouthers — I could hae carried twa sic then — carried her to my hut, and laid her on my bed. Neighbours cam and brought help — but the words she uttered in her ravings, when she got back the use of speech, were such, that I was fain to send them awa’, and get up word to Glen-allan-house. The Countess sent down her Spanish servant Teresa — if ever there was a fiend on earth in human form, that woman was ane — She and I were to watch the unhappy leddy, and let no other person approach. God knows what Teresa’s part was to hae been — she tauld it not to me — but Heaven took the conclusion in its ain hand. The poor leddy! she took the pangs of travail before her time, bore a male child, and died in the arms of me — of her mortal enemy! — Aye, ye may weep — she



was a sightly creature to see to — but think ye, if I didna mourn her then, that I can mourn her now? — Na, na! — I left Teresa wi' the dead corpse and new-born babe, till I gaed up to take the Countess's commands what was to be done. Late as it was, I ca'd her up, and she gar'd me ca' up your brother" —

"My brother?"

"Yes, Lord Geraldin, e'en your brother, that some said she aye wished to be her heir. At ony rate, he was the person maist concerned in the succession and heritance of the house of Glenallan."

"And is it possible to believe, then, that my brother, out of avarice to grasp at my inheritance, would lend himself to such a base and dreadful stratagem?"

"Your mother believed it," said the old bel-dame with a fiendish laugh — "it was nae plot of my making — but what they did or said I will not say, because I did not hear. Lang and sair they consulted in the black wainscot dressing-room; and when your brother passed through the room where I was waiting, it seemed to me (and I have often thought sae since syne) that the fire of hell was in his cheek and een. But he had left some of it with his mother at ony rate. She entered the room like a woman demented, and the first words she spoke were,



‘Elspeth Cheyne, did ye ever pull a new-budded flower?’ I answered, as ye may believe, that I aften had; ‘then,’ said she, ‘ye will ken the better how to blight the spurious and heretical blossom that has sprung forth this night to disgrace my father’s noble house — See here;’ — (and she gave me a golden bodkin) — ‘Nothing but gold must shed the blood of Glenallan. This child is already as one of the dead, and since thou and Teresa alone ken that it lives, let it be dealt upon as ye will answer to me!’ and she turned away in her fury, and left me with the bodkin in my hand. Here it is; that and the ring of Miss Neville are a’ I hae preserved of my ill-gotten gear — formuckle was the gear I got. And weel hae I keepit the secret, but no for the gowd or gear either.”

Her long and bony hand held out to Lord Glenallan a gold bodkin, down which in fancy he saw the blood of his infant trickling.

“Wretch! had you the heart?”

“I ken na if I could hae had it or no. I returned to my cottage without feeling the ground that I trod on; but Teresa and the child were gane — a’ that was alive were gane — naething left but the lifeless corpse.”

“And did you never learn my infant’s fate?”

“I could but guess. I have tauld ye your mother’s purpose, and I ken Teresa was a fiend.



She was never mair seen in Scotland, and I have heard that she returned to her ain land. A dark curtain has fa'en ower the past, and the few that witnessed ony part of it could only surmise something of seduction and suicide. You yoursel" —

"I know — I know it all," answered the Earl.

"You indeed know all that I can say — and now, heir of Glenallan, can you forgive me?"

"Ask forgiveness of God, and not of man," said the Earl, turning away.

"And how shall I ask of the pure and unstained what is denied to me by a sinner like mysel? — If I hae sinned, hae I not suffered? — Hae I had a day's peace or an hour's rest since these lang wet locks of hair first lay upon my pillow at Craighburnfoot? — Has not my house been burned, wi' my bairn in the cradle? — Has not my boats been wrecked when a' others weathered the gale? — Has not a' that were near and dear to me dree'd penance for my sin? — Has not the fire had its share o' them — the winds had their part — the sea had her part? — And oh!" (she added, with a lengthened groan, looking first upwards towards Heaven, and then bending her eyes on the floor) — "Oh! that the earth would take her part, that's been lang lang wearying to be joined to it!"



Lord Glenallan had reached the door of the cottage, but the generosity of his nature did not permit him to leave the unhappy woman in this state of desperate reprobation. "May God forgive thee, wretched woman," he said, "as sincerely as I do! — turn for mercy to Him, who can alone grant mercy, and may your prayers be heard as if they were mine own! — I will send a religious man."

"Na, na, nae priest! nae priest!" she ejaculated; and the door of the cottage opening as she spoke, prevented her from proceeding.



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CHAPTER XXXIV.

*Still in his dead hand clench'd remain the
strings
That thrill his father's heart — e'en as the
limb;
Lopped off and laid in grave, retains, they
tell us,
Strange commerce with the mutilated stump,
Whose nerves are twinging still in maim'd
existence.*

Old Play.

THE Antiquary, as we informed the reader in the end of chapter XXXth, had shaken off the company of worthy Mr Blattergowl, although he offered to entertain him with an abstract of the ablest speech he had ever known in the teind court, delivered by the procurator for the church in the remarkable case of the parish of Gatherem. Resisting this temptation,

our senior preferred a solitary path, which again conducted him to the cottage of Mucklebackit. When he came in front of the fisherman's hut, he observed a man working intently, as if to repair a shattered boat which lay upon the beach, and, going up to him, was surprised to find it was Mucklebackit himself. "I am glad," he said, in a tone of sympathy — "I am glad, Saunders, that you feel yourself able to make this exertion."

And what would you have me to do," answered the fisher gruffly, "unless I wanted to see four children starve, because ane is drowned? It's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our warks again, if our hearts were beating as my hammer."

Without taking more notice of Oldbuck he proceeded in his labour, and the Antiquary, to whom the display of human nature under the influence of agitating passions was never indifferent, stood beside him, in silent attention, as if watching the progress of the work. He observed more than once the man's hard features, as if by the force of association, prepare to accompany the sound of the saw and hammer with his usual symphony of a rude

tune hummed or whistled, and as often a slight twitch of convulsive expression showed that, ere the sound was uttered, a cause for suppressing it rushed upon his mind. At length, when he had patched a considerable rent, and was beginning to mend another, his feelings appeared altogether to derange the power of attention necessary for his work. The piece of wood which he was about to nail on was at first too long; then he sawed it off too short; then chose another equally ill adapted for the purpose. At length, throwing it down in anger, after wiping his dim eye with his quivering hand, he exclaimed, "There is a curse either on me or on this auld black bitch of a boat, that I have hauled up high and dry, and patched and clouted sae mony years, that she might drown my poor Steenie at the end of them, an' be d—d to her!" and he flung his hammer against the boat, as if she had been the intentional cause of his misfortune. Then recollecting himself, he added, "Yet what needs ane be angry at her, that has neither soul nor sense? — though I am no that muckle better mysel. She's but a rickle o' auld rotten deals nailed thegither, and warped wi' the wind and the sea — and I am a dour carle, battered by foul weather at sea and land till I am maist as senseless as hersel. She maun be mended

though again the morning tide — that's a thing o' necessity."

Thus speaking, he went to gather together his instruments, and attempt to resume his labour, but Oldbuck took him kindly by the arm. "Come, come," he said, "Saunders, there's no work for you this day — I'll send down Shavings the carpenter to mend the boat, and he may put the day's work into my account — and you had better not rise to-morrow, but stay to comfort your family under this dispensation, and the gardener will bring you some vegetables and meal from Monkbarns."

"I thank ye, Monkbarns," answered the poor fisher; "I am a plain-spoken man, and hae little to say for mysel; I might hae learned fairer fashions frae my mither lang syne, but I never saw muckle gude they did her; however, I thank ye. Ye were aye kind and neighbourly, whatever folk says o' your being near and close; and I hae often said in thae times when they were ganging to raise up the puir folk against the gentles — I hae often said, ne'er a man should steer a hair touching to Monkbarns while Steenie and I could wag a finger — and so said Steenie too. And, Monkbarns, when ye laid his head in the grave, (and mony thanks for the respect,) ye saw the

moulds laid on an honest lad that like it you weel, though he made little phrase about it."

Oldbuck, beaten from the pride of his affected cynicism, would not willingly have had any one by upon that occasion to quote to him his favourite maxims of the Stoic philosophy. The large drops fell fast from his own eyes, as he begged the father, who was now melted at recollecting the bravery and generous sentiments of his son, to forbear useless sorrow, and led him by the arm towards his own home, where another scene awaited our Antiquary. As he entered, the first person whom he beheld was Lord Glenallan.

Mutual surprise was in their countenances as they saluted each other, with haughty reserve on the part of Mr Oldbuck, and embarrassment on that of the Earl.

"My Lord Glenallan, I think?" said Mr Oldbuck.

"Yes — much changed from what he was when he knew Mr Oldbuck."

"I do not mean," said the Antiquary, "to intrude upon your lordship — I only came to see this distressed family."

"And you have found one, sir, who has still greater claims on your compassion."

"My compassion? Lord Glenallan cannot need *my* compassion — if Lord Glenallan could need it, I think he would hardly ask it."

“Our former acquaintance,” said the Earl —

“Is of such ancient date, my Lord — was of such short duration, and was connected with circumstances so exquisitely painful, that I think we may dispense with renewing it.”

So saying, the Antiquary turned away, and left the hut; but Lord Glenallan followed him into the open air, and, in spite of a hasty “Good morning, my Lord,” requested a few minutes conversation, and the favour of his advice in an important matter.

“Your Lordship will find many more capable to advise you, my Lord, and to whom your intercourse will be deemed an honour. For me, I am a man retired from business and the world, and not very fond of raking up the past events of my useless life; and forgive me if I say, I have particular pain in reverting to that period of it when I acted like a fool, and your Lordship like” — He stopped short.

“Like a villain, you would say,” said Lord Glenallan, “for such I must have appeared to you.”

“My Lord — my Lord, I have no desire to hear your shrift,” said the Antiquary.

“But, sir, if I can shew you that I am more sinned against than sinning — that I have been a man miserable beyond the power of description, and who looks forward at this moment to an untimely grave as to a haven of rest,

you will not refuse the confidence which, accepting your appearance at this critical moment as a hint from Heaven, I venture thus to press on you?"

"Assuredly, my Lord, I shall shun no longer the continuation of this extraordinary interview."

"I must then recal to you our occasional meetings upwards of twenty years since at Knockwinnock castle, and I need not remind you of a lady who was then a member of that family."

"The unfortunate Miss Eveline Neville, my Lord — I remember it well."

"Towards whom you entertained sentiments" —

"Very different from those with which I before and since have regarded her sex. Her gentleness, her docility, her pleasure in the studies which I pointed out to her, attached my affections more than became my age (though that was not then much advanced,) or the solidity of my character. But I need not remind your Lordship of the various modes in which you indulged your gaiety at the expence of an awkward and retired student, embarrassed by the expression of feelings so new to him, and I have no doubt that the young lady joined you in the well-deserved ridicule — it is the way of womankind. I have spoke at once to the painful circumstances of my addresses and

their rejection, that your Lordship may be satisfied every thing is full in my memory, and may, so far as I am concerned, tell your story without scruple or needless delicacy."

"I will," said Lord Glenallan; "but first let me say, you do injustice to the memory of the gentlest and kindest, as well as to the most unhappy of women, to suppose she could make a jest of the honest affection of a man like you. Frequently did she blame me, Mr Oldbuck, for indulging my levity at your expence — may I now presume you will excuse the gay freedoms which then offended you? — my state of mind has never since laid me under the necessity of apologizing for the inadvertencies of a light and happy temper."

"My Lord, you are fully pardoned," said Mr Oldbuck. "You will be aware, that, like all others, I was ignorant at the time that I placed myself in competition with your Lordship, and understood that Miss Neville was in a state of dependence which might make her prefer a competent independence and the hand of an honest man — But I am wasting time — I would I could believe that the views entertained towards her by others were as fair and honest as mine!"

"Mr Oldbuck, you judge harshly."

"Not without cause, my Lord; when I only, of all the magistrates of this county, having

neither, like some of them, the honour to be connected with your powerful family, nor, like others, the meanness to fear it — when I made some enquiry into the manner of Miss Neville's death — I shake you, my Lord, but I must be plain — I do own I had every reason to believe that she had met most unfair dealing, and had either been imposed upon by a counterfeit marriage, or that very strong measures had been adopted to stifle and destroy the evidence of a real union. And I cannot doubt in my own mind, that this cruelty on your Lordship's part, whether coming of your own free will, or proceeding from the influence of the late Countess, hurried the unfortunate young lady to the desperate act by which her life was terminated."

"You are deceived, Mr Oldbuck, into conclusions which are not just, however naturally they flow from the circumstances. Believe me, I respected you even when I was most embarrassed by your active attempts to investigate our family misfortunes. You shewed yourself more worthy of Miss Neville than I, by the spirit with which you persisted in vindicating her reputation even after her death. But the firm belief, that your well-meant efforts could only serve to bring to light a story too horrible to be detailed, induced me to join my unhappy mother in schemes to remove or de-

stroy all evidence of the legal union which had taken place between Eveline and myself. And now let us sit down on this bank, for I feel unable to remain longer standing, and have the goodness to listen to the extraordinary discovery which I have this day made."

They sate down accordingly, and Lord Glenallan briefly narrated his unhappy family history — his concealed marriage — the horrible invention by which his mother had designed to render impossible that union which had already taken place. He detailed the arts by which the Countess, having all the documents relative to Miss Neville's birth in her hands, had produced those only relating to a period during which, for family reasons, his father had consented to own that young lady as his natural daughter, and shewed how impossible it was that he could either suspect or detect the fraud put upon him by his mother, and vouched by the oaths of her attendants, Teresa and Elspeth. "I left my paternal mansion," he concluded, "as if the furies of hell had driven me forth, and travelled with frantic velocity I knew not whither. Nor have I the slightest recollection of what I did or whither I went, until I was discovered by my brother. I will not trouble you with an account of my sick-bed and recovery, or how long afterwards I ventured to enquire after the sharer of my misfortunes, and

heard that her despair had found a dreadful remedy for all the ills of life. The first thing that roused me to thought was hearing of your enquiries into this cruel business; and you will hardly wonder, that, believing what I did believe, I should join in those expedients to stop your investigation, which my brother and mother had actively commenced. The information which I gave them concerning the circumstances and witnesses of our private marriage enabled them to baffle your zeal. The clergyman, therefore, and witnesses, as persons who had acted in the matter only to please the powerful heir of Glenallan, were accessible to his promises and threats, and were so provided for, that they had no objections to leave this country for another. For myself, Mr Oldbuck," pursued this unhappy man, "from that moment I considered myself as blotted out of the book of the living, and as having nothing left to do with this world. My mother tried to reconcile me to life by every art — even by intimations which I can now interpret as calculated to produce a doubt of the horrible tale she herself had fabricated. But I construed all she said as the fictions of maternal affection. I will forbear all reproach — she is no more — and, as her wretched associate said, she knew not how the dart was poisoned, or how deep it must sink, when she threw it from her hand.

But, Mr Oldbuck, if ever, during these twenty years, there crawled upon earth a living being deserving of your pity, I have been that man. My food has not nourished me — my sleep has not refreshed me — my devotions have not comforted me — all that is cheering and necessary to man has been to me converted into poison. The rare and limited intercourse which I have held with others has been most odious to me. I felt as if I were bringing the contamination of unnatural and inexpressible guilt among the gay and the innocent. There have been moments when I had thoughts of another description — to plunge into the adventures of war, or to brave the dangers of the traveller in foreign and barbarous climates — to mingle in political intrigue, or to retire to the stern seclusion of the anchorites of our religion — All these are thoughts which have alternately passed through my mind, but each required an energy, which was mine no longer after the withering stroke I had received. I vegetated on as I could in the same spot, — fancy, feeling, judgment, and health, gradually decaying, like a tree whose bark has been destroyed, — when first the blossoms fade, then the boughs, until its state resembles the decayed and dying trunk that is now before you. Do you now pity and forgive me?"

"My Lord," answered the Antiquary, much

affected, "my pity — my forgiveness, you have not to ask, for your dismal story is of itself not only an ample excuse for whatever appeared mysterious in your conduct, but a narrative that might move your worst enemies (and I, my Lord, was never of the number) to tears and to sympathy. But permit me to ask what you now mean to do, and why you have honoured me, whose opinion can be of little consequence, with your confidence on this occasion?"

"Mr Oldbuck," answered the Earl, "as I could never have foreseen the nature of that confession which I have heard this day, I need not say that I had no formed plan of consulting you or any one upon affairs, the tendency of which I could not even have suspected. But I am without friends, unused to business, and, by long retirement, unacquainted alike with the laws of the land and the habits of the living generation; and where, most unexpectedly, I find myself immersed in the matters of which I know least, I catch, like a drowning man, at the first support that offers. You are that support, Mr Oldbuck. I have always heard you mentioned as a man of wisdom and intelligence — I have known you myself as a man of a resolute and independent spirit — and there is one circumstance," said he, "which ought to combine us in some degree — our having paid tribute to the same excellence of character in poor Eveline. You offered your-

self to me in my need, and you were already acquainted with the beginning of my misfortunes. To you, therefore, I have recourse for advice, for sympathy, for support."

"You shall seek none of them in vain, my Lord," said Oldbuck, "so far as my slender ability extends; and I am honoured by the preference, whether it arises from choice or is prompted by chance. But this is a matter to be ripely considered. May I ask what are your principal views at present?"

"To ascertain the fate of my child," said the Earl, "be the consequences what they may, and to do justice to the honour of Eveline, which I have only permitted to be suspected to avoid discovery of the yet more horrible taint to which I was made to believe it liable."

"And the memory of your mother?"

"Must bear its own burthen," answered the Earl, with a sigh; "better that she were justly convicted of deceit, should that be found necessary, than that others should be unjustly accused of crimes so much more dreadful."

"Then, my Lord," said Oldbuck, "our first business must be to put the information of the old woman, Elspeth, into a regular and authenticated form."

"That," said Lord Glenallan, "will be at present, I fear, impossible — She is exhausted herself, and surrounded by her distressed family.

To-morrow, perhaps, when she is alone — and yet I doubt, from her imperfect sense of right and wrong, whether she would speak out in any one's presence but my own — I too am sorely fatigued."

"Then, my Lord," said the Antiquary, whom the interest of the moment elevated above points of expence and convenience, which had generally more than enough of weight with him, "I would propose to your Lordship, instead of returning, fatigued as you are, so far as to Glenallan-house, or taking the more uncomfortable alternative of going to a bad inn at Fairport, to alarm all the busy bodies of the town — I would propose, I say, that you should be my guest at Monkbarns for this night — By to-morrow these poor people will have renewed their out-of-doors vocation, for sorrow with them affords no respite from labour, and we will visit the old woman, Elspeth, alone, and take down her examination."

After a formal apology for the encroachment, Lord Glenallan agreed to go with him, and underwent with patience in their return home the whole history of John of the Girnell, a legend which Mr Oldbuck was never known to spare any one who crossed his threshold.

The arrival of a stranger of such note, with two saddle horses and a servant in black, which servant had holsters on his saddle-bow, and a coronet upon the holsters, created a general

commotion in the house of Monkbarns. Jenny Rintherout, scarce recovered from the hysterics which she had taken upon hearing of poor Steenie's misfortune, chased upon the turkeys and poultry, cackled and screamed louder than they did, and ended by killing one-half too many. Miss Griselda made many wise reflections on the hot-headed wilfulness of her brother, who had occasioned such a devastation, by suddenly bringing in upon them a papist nobleman. And she ventured to transmit to Mr Blattergowl some hint of the unusual slaughter which had taken place in the *basse-cour*, which brought the honest clergyman to enquire how his friend Monkbarns had got home, and whether he was not the worse of being at the funeral, at a period so near the ringing of the bell for dinner, that the Antiquary had no choice left but to invite him to stay and bless the meat. Miss M'Intyre had on her part some curiosity to see this mighty peer of whom all had heard, as an eastern caliph or sultan is heard of by his subjects, and felt some degree of timidity at the idea of encountering a person, of whose unsocial habits and stern manners so many stories were told, that her fear kept at least pace with her curiosity. The aged housekeeper was no less flustered and hurried in obeying the numerous and contradictory commands of her mistress, concerning preserves, pastry, and

fruits, the mode of marshalling and dishing the dinner, the necessity of not permitting the melted butter to run to oil, and the danger of allowing Juno, — who, though formally banished from the parlour, failed not to maraud about the out-settlements of the family, — to enter the kitchen.

The only inmate of Monkbarns who remained entirely indifferent on this momentous occasion was Hector M'Intyre, who cared no more for an Earl than he did for a commoner, and who was only interested in his visit, as it would afford some protection against his uncle's displeasure, if he harboured any, for his not attending the funeral, and still more against his satire upon the subject of his gallant but unsuccessful single combat with the phoca, or seal.

To these, the inmates of his household, Oldbuck presented the Earl of Glenallan, who underwent, with meek and subdued civility, the prosing speeches of the honest divine, and the lengthened apologies of Miss Griselda Oldbuck, which her brother in vain endeavoured to abridge. Before the dinner hour, Lord Glenallan requested permission to retire a while to his chamber. Mr Oldbuck accompanied his guest to the Green Room, which had been hastily prepared for his reception. He looked around with an air of painful recollection.

“I think,” at length he observed, “I think, Mr Oldbuck, that I have been in this apartment before.”

“Yes, my Lord,” answered Oldbuck, “upon occasion of an excursion hither from Knockwinnock — and since we are upon a subject so melancholy, you may perhaps remember whose taste supplied these lines from Chaucer, which now form the motto of the tapestry.”

“I guess,” said the Earl, “though I cannot recollect — She excelled me, indeed, in literary taste and information, as in every thing else; and it is one of the mysterious dispensations of Providence, Mr Oldbuck, that a creature so excellent in mind and body should have been cut off in so miserable a manner, merely from her having formed a fatal attachment to such a wretch as I am.”

Mr Oldbuck did not attempt an answer to this burst of the grief which lay ever nearest to the heart of his guest, but, pressing Lord Glenallan's hand with one of his own, and drawing the other across his shaggy eyelashes, as if to brush away a mist that intercepted his sight, he left the Earl at liberty to arrange himself previous to dinner.

Scott, Walter,

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